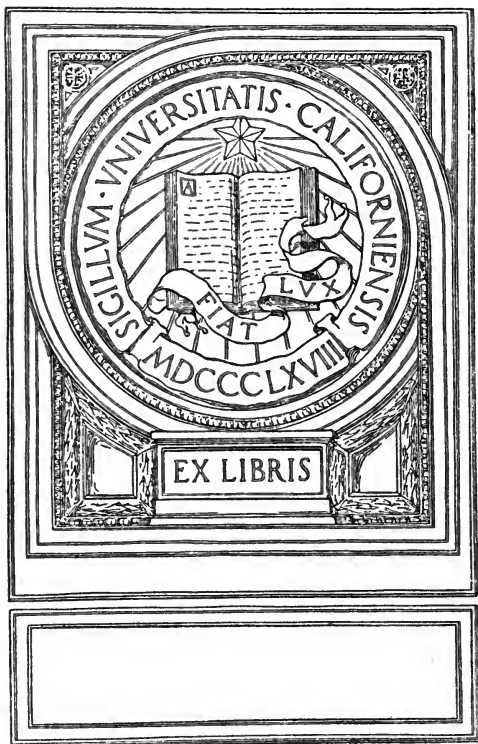


❖ JUSTICE ❖  
CHARLES WAGNER

Author of *The Simple Life*

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**JUSTICE**

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*The Simple Life, The Better Way, By the Fireside, On  
Life's Threshold, My Appeal to America*

# JUSTICE

By

CHARLES WAGNER

*Author of The Simple Life*

*Translated from the French by Mary Louise Hendee*



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# **PREFACE**

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## PREFACE

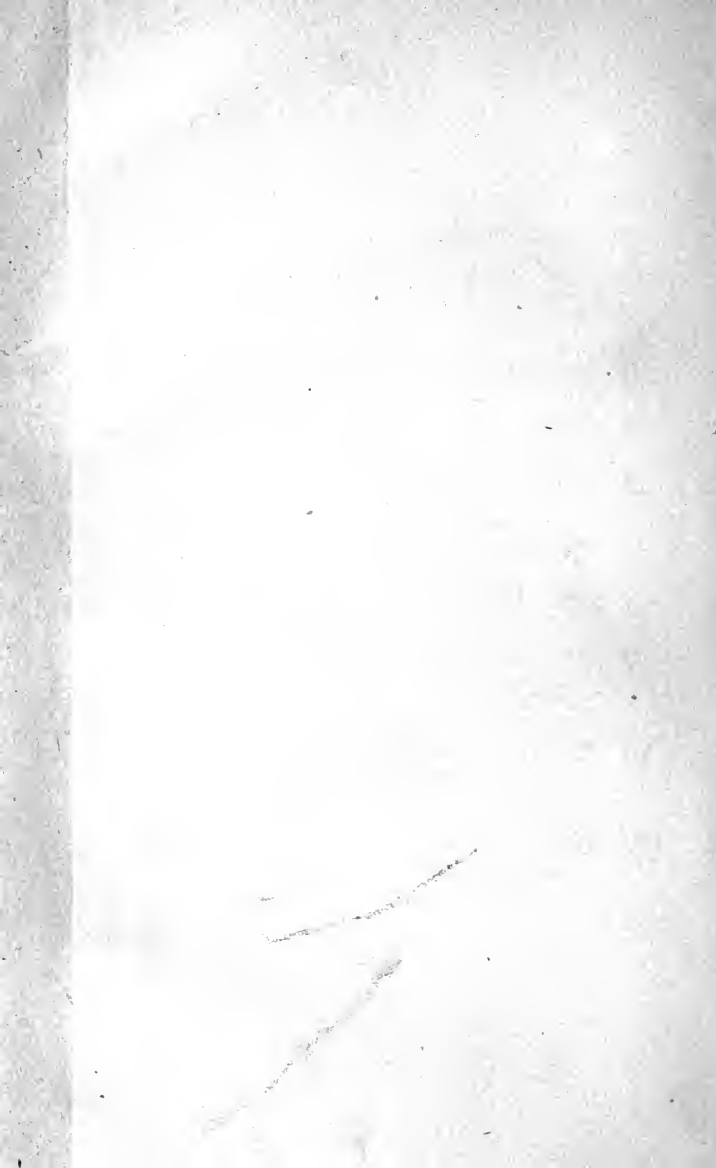
**O**UR time is often called an age of tolerance; alas, what irony in the term! for if there be any one good thing that especially fails us, it is tolerance; although indispensable to the discovery of truth, and to the establishment of good understanding among individuals and between social, religious, and national groups, it seems to have fled the earth. A disposition to unfairness, bad faith, and evil-speaking, is abroad in every field, and a matter over which men do not contend at daggers drawn, is hard to find. My brother, are you among those who rejoice in all this? I dare hope that you are not.

As for myself, I grieve over it as the saddest

thing in the world; and the farther the impure fires of discord and hatred spread, the more sensible do I become of the strengthening of another ideal within me. In spirit I look out upon the humble path trod by the Son of Man, and listen to His summing up of the human law in the words: Love one another. The spirit of strife which characterizes the present age, is precisely the opposite of His. One day He said to His disciples: "Ye can do nothing without me." We of this age are in the way of furnishing a brilliant and overwhelming proof of the fact, amplified by all the enormity of our vain struggles. Strife is the law of the lower beings, the higher law is fellowship, and whatever fosters life in regions below us, leads man back toward barbarism. If violence is the salvation of the brutes, the salvation of man is Justice.

He who writes these words has lived constantly among conflicting influences, yet God has so led him over the ground of man's social, religious, intellectual, and national life, that he has been

constrained to see the good on both sides of the dividing lines. This unusual situation has brought him much suffering, but he would ask for only one compensation: that his experience might be in some slight measure profitable to Justice. The following very incomplete pages have no other aim than the fulfilment of this hope. A cry from the heart, may they reach the hearts of others.



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# JUSTICE





## I

### THE BIRTH TO RIGHTEOUSNESS

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born  
anew, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.

JOHN iii. 3.

**T**HE discovery by attentive eyes of a sort of depression in the moral sense, is not a matter of yesterday; to observe it to-day requires no attention at all — the phenomenon is self-evident and self-accusing. To errors of conduct have succeeded still graver errors, those of principle. Sophistry has made its way from isolated acts to the very spring of action, the conscience, and we see everywhere the most disquieting signs of moral decadence. Evil is evil no longer and good

is no longer good; man's will repudiated, his responsibility denied, these two forces have undergone a sort of eclipse. And even among those who recognize the malady, how many hope for a cure? Some struggle on, to ease conscience, but they think themselves foolish not to declare openly that all their illusions have perished. Among these men, resigned to existing circumstances, we come upon wanderers who call themselves religious men and Christians, yet they have deferred their hopes and God's victories to another world. As for the philosophers, they ponder and scrutinize these plagues which consume us, but at the very mention of the art of healing, they smile. It is all indisputably grave, and but one possible resource is left us — to believe in the good with all our strength, and to believe as firmly in the tragic reality of evil; in the strife of Good against Evil the issue lies.

The proof of the fact is, that those who do not perceive it are requited for their blindness with barren lives. They go their unprofitable way,

crushed under a burden of wasted time. Life has no other utility or aim than the throwing of one's self heartily into the supreme struggle. Nothing is lost in it — grain of sand or cornerstone: all that man's effort brings to it, finds by the eternal laws its appointed place, goes to strengthen either the bulwarks of evil or the City of God. Woe to him who folds his hands because of his insignificance; to do nothing is the very worst fashion of doing evil.

**T**HIS moral depression of which we are speaking, shows itself, among other ways, in a great want of equity. We are not just to one another. Between nations, between religious bodies, between political parties, between the divers classes of society, among scientists — indeed, in all of men's relations with one another, there is an astonishing lack of fair play. True, war in all its forms, and the conflict of rival forces, are as old as the world, and so are the woeful excesses they beget; but if they have

sometimes brought into use more barbarous weapons than ours, I fear, to our shame, that they have rarely invented more perfidious ones. The watchword seems now to be: *Our adversary is our enemy, our adversary is an evil-doer!* To fight him is a little matter; we must dishonour him; where he is concerned, equity is folly, if indeed its improbability does not give it an air of treason.

Devotion to a cause is measured by ferocity toward its opponents, and by the lengths to which indulgence for its partisans goes. Everybody is acquainted with these facts, but in spite of their familiarity they are painful to contemplate. And out of this evil come greater evils, for injustice is a fruitful mother; when she has strewn the earth with calumny, wilful blindness, malice and distrust, she fills it with bloodshed and ruin.

The urgent duty of everybody who is conscious of the state of affairs, is counteraction. In what form? — ah, that is the great question. For my part, I have faith in but one method — that of activity and example, united with untiring patience,

and the wisdom that is content with small beginnings. Without wishing to exclude anybody or discourage any effort, it seems to me that this mission in behalf of equity and loyalty, is peculiarly within the province of the Christian.

Christianity, when it does not rest in sterile doctrine or formal rites, but is transformed into life, is a power for justice. Christ has been called a mediator, because He has reconciled God with man and man with God, in a transcendent accord of love and pardon; but He is also a mediator in another sense. By appeasing hatred and selfishness, by checking evil impulses and bridging space, He reconciles man with man. And whoever is Christ's disciple, not with the lips but from the heart, shares in this power. *The Christian is a mediator and a peacemaker.* We shall try to show him such, even in the thick of the fight; but first it will be well to examine the conditions this delicate mission demands.

**T**HE just man is not the product of a day, but of a long brooding and a painful birth. To become a power for peace, a man must first pass through experiences which lead him to see things in their different aspects: it is necessary that he have a wide horizon, and breathe various atmospheres; — in a word, from crossing, one after another, paths and points of view the most diverse, and sometimes the most contradictory, he must acquire the faculty of putting himself in the place of others and appreciating them. These conditions are realized for the Christian, in the course of the profound experience which is called conversion or regeneration. Here, then, is the heart of our matter; from this source spring the living waters whose course we would turn over the parched ground where the divine flower of Justice is withering and dying.



**W**HAT is regeneration, as a Christian fact? Christ has said, that to enter into the kingdom of righteousness, we must become as little children. By that He meant that we must rid ourselves of everything artificial which life may have mixed with our development, and aspire to become men, in all the beauty and simplicity of the term. By the aid of the Gospel, which throws a new light along his path, man sees that he has gone astray; he comes out, as it were, from a dream into reality. He has been living among myths and falsehoods; now joy and pain, toiling and strife, all the things of the past, vanish away. That was not life but death. Awake at last, he takes his bearings, counsels within himself, and begins to be initiated, by the spirit of truth at work within him, into the mysteries of his destiny. He has a revelation of himself, and the first effect of it is nothing but agitation and distress.

A painful contradiction lies athwart his whole being — his life, his beginning, and his end. A

superhuman strife is let loose in the depths of his consciousness, a formidable clash of warring forces shakes the whole world of his inner life. Let us enter more into detail, that we may the better picture this series of contrasts, of paradoxes, among which man aspires to effect a reconciliation.

THE contrast most in evidence, that which contact with the person of Christ in the Gospel brings out most strikingly, is the moral contrast. In the presence of this perfect kindness, this clemency, this smiling but unswerving energy, man feels at once both the beauty of the true life, and the pain of being so far away from it himself. Never have the hidden obstacles which check his development, his obscure leanings toward evil, and his perversities, appeared to him more real; never have his old fetters galled him more cruelly. And yet, in spite of all these bonds, these heredities, these lower fatalities, he was never more plainly aware of his higher affinities. From the face of Jesus a ray of

light has slipped even into his captivity, and he knows that he, in chains, is the brother of Him who is free. Would he find Him so admirable if he were not sure in his heart of this consoling relationship? Yet here lies, too, the secret of his martyrdom. Only those who have passed through the experience, can know the tears, the anguish, the unutterable despair, wrapped up in these words — the sum of the moral contradiction which lies at the very heart of us: — *Man is a poor sinner who aspires to righteousness.*

**I**N the mind, the same contradiction, result of that perpetual evolution which is our law. Man is not the unconsciousness which slumbers and is unaware of itself, like the stone of the highway, the plant or the beast; no more is he the luminous consciousness that grasps and penetrates all things. Man is born to that half-light where ignorance and knowledge struggle with each other like the vacillating gleams and shadows of twilight. Out of the depths of the infinite

a voice has cried "Come!" and he goes — before him the dawn, behind him the night. Shrouded as he is in the unknown, and delivered up to the passion for knowing, it seems as though the ray of light he has, were given him but the better to perceive the impenetrable darkness. *Man is an ignoramus athirst for knowledge.*

**M**AN passes; he knows that he is dust; nothing is more evident than his frailty. If he should for a single moment forget it, what a chorus of voices would recall it to him! And yet, in the drop of existence which he absorbs, he takes in ages through memory and ages through presentiment. In the moments as they pass, he dimly sees eternity, and more than this, he lays hold on it, he soars to it upon his hope, he possesses it by anticipation. And this being, who already bears to his lips the cup of eternal life, is also the only one who drains the bitter cup of death, for he alone knows that he dies. *Man is a mortal in search of immortality.*

**L**IKE those beings below him in the scale of life, man aims to turn all things to his own profit. With the irresistible force of instinct, he draws to himself, as to a natural centre, the lives about him. Around this centre the others gravitate, with their interests subordinated to his personal interests. Man, more clear-sighted than the brute, transforms into conscious and calculated egoism, what in nature is only vague tendency or blind passion. He is the conscious rival and competitor of his fellows, whose share in things takes away from his own; and through this fact he even comes to hate them. But this tendency to combat and to repulse, is counterbalanced by another — that tendency to sociability, that need of loving, which springs from the depths of the human heart, and is strengthened by the countless bonds attaching the individual to society. The more complicated a being is, the more tangible and sensible are these bonds, and through impressions which have the power to put a check on the transports

of the most unrestrained egoism, man discovers a higher form of living. In an elementary way at first, but more and more completely as time goes on, he is initiated into the delight of loving, and of being happy, not from receiving but from giving. His purest joys, like his most sacred griefs, are those in which he becomes one with the lives of others. Thus there arises a perpetual wrenching between the selfishness of the lower impulses and the spirit of sacrifice, of fellowship, that better inspiration. The strife is fundamental and violent and full of painful alternatives. Here, then, is another source of bitterness: — *Man is an egoist who has need of loving others.*

**H**E is also an unfortunate who dreams of happiness, a being harassed and weary, in search of peace. To mention these things is to recall what we have all felt times without number in our hours of self-communion.

It is true that they seldom disturb us more than vaguely; less important matters easily turn

our thoughts aside. But we are speaking now of the man whom decisive experiences have brought face to face with himself. Such a man, a prey to all these contradictions, becomes for a time extremely miserable. Doubt and the need of certitude, sin and the need of sanctity, thirst for life and the consciousness of death — all these things are anguish to him. He is a man on the flood-tide, fighting for his life; an atom, lost between the infinite heaven and the boundless sea. Out of the depths he cries, as once Saint Paul did: “O wretched man that I am, who shall *save* me?” If at this point, his soul thus bruised and spent, he encounters the Christ and rightly comprehends Him, he is saved; for he has found a life wherein all the contending forces which torment his own are resolved into a perfect harmony. Now, little by little, he is able to fathom the truths which are the heart of the Gospel, and whose measureless and inexhaustible riches are freely revealed in such simple words as these:— “Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.” “Be not afraid, only believe.” But

one thing is needful: love the Father and the brethren. "He that believeth in me shall never die." "I am the way, the truth and the life." "Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me: for I am meek and lowly in heart; my yoke is easy and my burden is light: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

To be healed of the ravages of sin by repentance and pardon; to be released from selfishness — that harsh bondage — through voluntary service and the freedom of obedience; to triumph over death by the gift of self, and to save his life by the loss of it — all these things the humble disciple learns at the feet of this Master, who bestows peace, because he possesses it and realizes it. There is no question here of the acceptance of a doctrine, or of adherence to a certain theory of the universe, but of the communication of new life. The apprenticeship is long and irksome, demands rigorous discipline of the will, and strict faithfulness in practice, and only he who strives



to do the will of the Father, and simply and sincerely to fulfil his human mission, becomes possessed of proof that the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation. He is in the presence neither of a philosopher fertile in precepts, nor of a serene and happy divinity, but of a Man of Sorrows, who has known our toils and our weariness, our temptations and our perplexities, and has overcome them all. In His face, through the tender sympathy our wretchedness calls forth, shines the assurance of final release. If the infinite pity of Him whom mortal eyes may not see, is to reach even to us, it may well be in the person of such a messenger. All that we lack, He has; all that we would be, He is. Upon the eternal rock of this soul, God has graven in characters that man's conscience spells out while he adores, the inspired Word of truth. Here is safety, here is the way; here is the gate of Heaven.

**H**E who knows the joy of penetrating little by little into the new life, is a witness of his own metamorphosis. Neither he, nor his world, nor his conceptions, nor his opinions, nor his interests, remain the same. He has withstood the fire of supreme battles, and minor conflicts no longer move him. So many things that just the other day he thought important, now seem trivial, while things he despised or forgot have become of the greatest worth. He sees all things from a vantage point, and under the unerring light of immortal truth, which reduces them to their just proportions. And above all — chief condition of impartiality — he has lost his overweening sense of his personality.

The too vivid consciousness of self, is one of man's idiosyncrasies, but it has appeared in varying degrees at different times. In our day it seems to have reached its zenith. Why does this morbid hyperæsthesia always follow in the train of a weakened moral sense? As the greatness of things diminishes, the importance of persons increases;

over the ruins of splendid interests, poor egotism is always rampant. Men seem to be trying to make up in sharpness and intensity of impression what they lack in permanence; and when they have lost faith in the higher realities, in eternal life, they cling frantically to the form that perisheth, to the name, the part, that is theirs for a day.

The Christian is a personality, a force, a child of God, a son of humanity; but he does not lay stress upon this; rather, he chooses to be nothing. He is of no account. His life, his joys and his sufferings are infinitely more important than he. He is a member of a great body; that is his assurance, the dearest source of all his hope. He lives neither through himself nor for himself, and so his personality casts no shadow upon truth, is not a stumbling-block in the way of justice.

**H**OWEVER, let us dwell a little upon the distinctive attitude of the Christian's mind. It is not the Olympian serenity of spectators seated round the arena, contemplating the strife with impartial and careless benevolence; such calm is a sign of moral debility; even injustice is better than this lofty indifference claiming to be justice. The Christian believes too firmly in the seriousness of life, in the prime importance of human activity and its bearing upon the future, upon eternity, to be present in the strife of good and evil without all his forces alive and alert.

Neither is the pacific influence of the Christian exerted in the direction of compromise and delay. His uprightness cannot brook the appearance of ambiguity and indecision. His aim is not to reconcile opposites through quibbles and subtleties, which would be to base equity on iniquity and truth on hypocrisy. It is from the unflinching shock of contraries that light leaps forth, and a noble strife is one of the most fruitful

forms of collaboration. Does not the regular play of balance-wheel and spring, produce the faultless movement of a reliable watch? These seem two contrary forces, but their antagonism is the condition of their usefulness. So the Christian looks upon that counteraction of minds, whence, through the free play of each, results the splendid synthesis of truth that no one could realize alone. Filled with this high idea, he takes great care not to thwart life by exacting uniformity; on the contrary, he values other men's ways of labouring for the Good, particularly those which act as correctives to his own activity; and stretching out his hands to the most diverse kinds of collaborators, he finds support coming to him from Orient and Occident alike.

Let us also carefully distinguish the spirit of Christian tolerance and justice from that weakness of will which makes us flee hostilities. Away with such a spirit! Let us never confound the peacemakers whom Christ calls the children of God, with those partisans of peace at any price,

whom the Apocalypse repays in the words of vengeance: "Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." The Christian remembers Christ to have said that He came to send on earth a sword. His equity is virile, militant. The peace which He would have us possess, is not the calm of the indolent but the conquest of the strong.

Cicero has defined the orator as an upright man who knows how to talk. We should like to make this definition of the Christian: "A just man who knows how to fight." In the world of to-day, the Christian should fill such a rôle as was filled by the knight in the dark hours of history, when the social order was tottering, and injustice was everywhere abroad. He is the man whom we need, sheathed in steel, but with a fraternal heart.

**N**OW let him set forth! He has made a rude apprenticeship; he has passed his long vigil in prayer; he has put on the armour described by Saint Paul; he has saluted his Chief and sworn fealty to Him. Let him set out on his quest for hard tasks and hand to hand encounters. And in the thick of battle, in the midst of rampant hatreds, wherever man traduces man, wherever brother maltreats brother, wherever falsehood corrupts and empoisons life, let him be a bearer of justice, a bulwark of defence. And if sometimes his task seems heavy, if he is weary, bruised and bleeding, let him listen to a voice chanting again, in the depths of his heart, like a memory of his home, like an echo from the skies, these words which the Prince of Peace spoke on the mountain: *Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake.*

## II

### DOMINION AND VOLUNTARY SERVICE

Whosoever would become great among you,  
shall be your minister; and whosoever would  
be first among you, shall be servant of all.

MARK X. 43-44.

**T**HE hospital ward stretches out in silence, with its two rows of white-curtained beds. The patients are not of the common run, but incurables, who will never leave their beds but to be laid at rest in the cemetery. Community of suffering is often the beginning of brotherliness — it is so natural that it should be; but that has not been the case in this abode of pain where I would have you turn your eyes for a moment. The people vegetating



here show a deplorable disposition toward one another; some breath of discord seems to have blown over them: harsh words are exchanged and jealousies are rife; they do each other ill turns with their nurses and their visitors; each seems to fancy that the care and attention given his neighbour is a curtailment of his own, and a dumb warfare goes on, fought out with miserable weapons, a warfare of weakness against weakness. These are dying men, and they hate one another, persecute one another, strive together for the chief place; and they have chosen for the field of their impotent struggle, the threshold of the grave. A spectacle to rend your heart, and unfortunately, not very rare to see.

Whenever facts of this kind present themselves, with their horror and their disconcerting power, it seems to me that I remember having seen something analogous elsewhere, but on a larger scale. Poor fools, whom such misfortune as yours has not taught to be pitiful to one another, you are a picture of humanity. Men, overcome by suffering and bur-

dens, and all the time occupied with doing one another harm, or in striving to be first — what are they but incurables, quarreling at the threshold of death?

**H**ERE we are confronted with one of the painful contradictions of our nature. Man is sensible of his weakness, and of the evils that beset him, and at times he is overcome by this perception. He has days when everything he strives for eludes his grasp, when his life and labour seem to be going up in impalpable smoke. Yet it is this same weak and trembling being who, at other times, pursues relentlessly a dream of conquest and glory. He strives to rise above his fellows, to subdue them to himself, to use them as stones in the pedestal of his greatness. To be a man of importance, to direct and control others, to be feared, admired, envied — this is his desire, and sometimes his passion.

This thirst for power shows itself under many and various forms, of which the intoxication of ab-

solute rule is only one. We may find it among students, and artists, and churchmen, and wage-earners, indeed, in every class of men. To be distinguished among one's fellows; to have been the first to discover a truth; to be in the right where others are in the wrong; to wear a livery, a uniform, a decoration; to be the possessor of a title; to write one's name with an *o'* or a *von* or a *de*, as an announcement to the world that he isn't of the rabble — these are precious privileges, for which it is proper to make great sacrifice, especially of the interests and welfare of one's neighbour. Need we recall the fact that two or three people can hardly become associated, for any purpose whatever, that one of them does not wish to be foremost in the affair? It is in this way that causes become confused with persons, ideas with men, and that the most auspicious beginnings often come to the most deplorable ends. This spirit is to be found in families, among the children, who are not satisfied with being loved, but want to be singled out as favourites; and even at the very heart of the

deepest affections, it succeeds in doing its direful work. Then love and friendship are put in jeopardy, for the question must be settled as to who shall command and who obey.

**Y**ET it is rarely true that a very human tendency, which is always cropping out, even in quarters where it is fought against, has not a reasonable basis. It may have gone astray, lowered its standard, served the evil instead of favouring the good; but it is not therefore to be condemned in itself. The thing is to seize upon its use, give it a normal direction.

In the last analysis, man's aspiration for greatness is simply the result of his condition. The law of every living thing is growth, a law more often apparent among men than elsewhere; so that in failing to fulfil it, man misses his aim. Jesus never condemned the tendency to rise, to become greater, but He had a distinctive conception of greatness, and pointed out a way of attaining it which is not the world's way. The world looks for greatness in

empire, and at the price of all sorts of injustice, at length succeeds in arriving at — vanity; Jesus marks out as the road to true greatness, *voluntary service*.

At the bottom of our desire for distinction, is the impulse we feel to increase our worth. Some think to accomplish it by surrounding themselves with external advantages, and in this belief, they give their chief attention to appearance — as merchants try to raise the value of their wares by their methods of displaying them. In one respect the trick is not vain; it rests on a very real and positive factor in the case — the weak-mindedness, folly, and credulity of the greater number. Very often we are moved to judge of reality by appearance, and this hopeless irresponsibility on our part, frees a goodly number of the ambitious from occupying themselves with anything beyond outward show. The errors in judgment caused in this way are almost incredible. We get radically false ideas of both people and things, becoming one another's dupes, and the dupes of ourselves; we pass our lives in the

midst of mirages and illusions, our forces spent, on the one hand, in building up an imaginary greatness, and on the other, in bowing down to it.

SO far the game is comparatively innocent. But man does not resort to optical illusion alone, in founding his distinction on the misguided judgment of his fellow-men; he employs further means, that are coercive and violent.

Mankind has a certain number of vulnerable points, that are seized upon by its enemies, like the known breaches of a fortress. Hunger, fear, the instinct of self-preservation, the love of pleasure — these are so many roads to our enslavement; and whoever wishes to rule, to master, to subject the wills of others to his own, makes haste to profit by them, as occasion offers. Whether it is a question of power, or simply of that position of influence and superiority among his neighbours, which the ambitious man feels to be his by right, he knows the springs that must be set in motion, and goes

straight to his task. Promises, threats, corruption, oppression — he stops at none of these. He holds some men through hope, others through fear, still others by the adroit flattery of their vices. Let such odious practices spread from man to man, from social group to social group, from nation to nation, and the result is inevitable; men become tyrants, oppressors of men.

Such a picture shows mankind on its basest side. Instead of the masquerade we found life a moment ago, it now becomes a battle or a hunt, with the world's acclaim for the victors. But my plaudits are not for them. Were no choice given me but to be numbered with them or with the vanquished, I should choose the lot of the latter, because morally it is less repulsive. But fortunately there is a better part to choose. Christ looked out upon all this struggle, and saw nothing in it but ugliness, injustice, crime, and cowardice, and, in the last degree of evil, that tyranny which men exercise over men — the cause of all other evils. "It shall not be so among you," He said to His disciples.

Then let us turn aside from these ways of the world, and follow the Master.

ONE day, in reply to the question: Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? Jesus called a little child from out the crowd, and answered, he! Now, when He is commenting on the authority exercised by the Gentiles, he goes a step farther. The child is little from necessity, and humble without knowing it; there is a more beautiful kind of humility, that which is voluntary. Whosoever would be first among you, Jesus says, shall be *servant of all*. A more emphatic stand for the reverse of the spirit of dominion could not be made, for in formulating a converse to these words of Christ, we arrive at this proposition: *Whosoever seeks for dominion, is the least among men*. There is no escaping it.

It need hardly be said that Christ is speaking of real service. He is not thinking simply of an attitude of mind, but of the entire direction of the will; the renunciation is complete, the sacrifice is real,



the service is active. It is a notion of something far removed from that subtlety which veils the thirst for greatness under an appearance of humility. This idea of Christ's suffered such a perversion, when, during the struggle between the Pope of Rome and the Patriarch of Constantinople, as to supremacy in the Christian Church, the Pope, replying to the arrogant claims of his competitor, took the title of *servus servorum Dei*. It was the height of astuteness; but the immoderate ambition pierced through the attitude of humility. And we hear of ministers of kings, who have become, indeed, kings in power, refusing the title of colleague, graciously offered them by their sovereign, to claim with ostentation the title of *servant*. It is in this sense that many flatterers of the masses — that sovereign of another sort — in order to the better arrive at enslaving them, call themselves *servants of the people*. All this diplomacy has not even a shadow of likeness to what Christ intended, let us make no mistakes about that. It is not a matter of appearance, nor of a figure of speech,

but of the thing itself. It cannot be denied that the demand is large; but if we are as far from the kingdom of righteousness as from the desire to be servants, we are deluded in thinking ourselves disciples of Jesus.

This error of understanding is far from impossible; the real Christ often remains a stranger, even among his own. However, we must follow where He trod. And what did He do? He served His brethren, He supported the weak, He raised the fallen, He brought back the lost, He effaced Himself, He offered Himself up a sacrifice; and in it all, He was the visible presentment of the invisible *Father*.

LET us approach, as we would tread on holy ground, a side of man's conception of God, that is too often utterly forgotten. Our idea of God generally presents itself through our prejudices, or even through our evil deeds, which we too often raise to the eternal throne with Him. The pure in heart see Him, Jesus said; but in the hearts of the crafty and men of strife, a con-

ception of a God in their own image, imposes itself like a chastisement. For a man to picture God with the attributes of an oriental despot, before whom everything bends, whose arbitrary will is without check, and whose caprice it is to make sport of men's destinies, is not so rare a thing as we might think, even among Christians. But this is far from being the God of Jesus; and no more is the God of Jesus some immortal Majesty that broods, serene and changeless, over the fluctuating tides of life. No; the God of Jesus, Him whom He announced, interpreted, loved even to the end, is the God of forgiveness and mercy, the God who humbles Himself; yes, let us say the word,—the God who *serves*. Of such a God, the Prophets, in their holiest conceptions, had glimpses in the days of old. Let us take up this thought, and follow it out.

God, He who is all in all, He whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, whose name shall no more be named, the one great God, is also — and this is His supreme greatness — a God humble and unseen, identifying Himself, in this great Na-

ture which He permeates and vivifies, with the least of its hidden forces and the most minute of its labours. If I ascend up into heaven, He is there. If I descend to the infinitely small, if I plunge in thought to the vertiginous point where substance is yet unperfect, He is there, creating, working.

But more than this, if I go down into the abyss of sorrows, into the region of hidden sufferings and tears, He is there. There is no heart cry that eludes Him, no frightful solitude that does not contain Him. Man does not suspect it, he thinks himself abandoned; but God is there. When His Prophets speak of this wonder, they are greatest, gentlest; the echo of their voices seems to rouse a trembling hope in the depths of hearts that are bruised, and to stir the Eternal Pity at the heart of the Infinite. "With everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee." "Can a woman forget her sucking child? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee!"

**L**ET us go yet further and to profounder depths. To be despised and rejected; to be the maker of all things, and yet esteemed as less than nothing; to reap neither gratitude nor love, but plentiful ingratitude; to be forgotten, blasphemed, repudiated,—who could dream that God the Father, the Living God, in suffering these things, shares in the lot of the meanest and most despised of slaves! In this conception of God, who, because He sees the evil and is moved with compassion, feels our offences, our suffering, and our injustice as a perpetual hurt, there are depths of love which humble us to the dust. To him who has a perception of this greatness, nothing else is great. But why stop here, when I may add with perfect certitude, that if the God whom you worship has not this grandeur, a man who feels pity, who suffers and dies, is greater than your God?

It was the sacred flame kindled by this conception of God, that made a servant of Christ, and inspired Paul to utter the words, at once so amazing and so just: — “Who is weak and I am not

weak? who is offended and I burn not?" Christians, in this unjust world where we live, where for the sake of dominion, men are divided and at war; where each tries to outstrip the other and humiliate him, if we would make justice a reality, *we must be the children of this God.*

Nothing less than the remembrance of this aspect of divinity, and the constant presence in our hearts of the God who stoops to serve, can make us love the narrow but blessed path of service. Before Him no one is great, save him who would be the servant of all.

**T**HERE is, moreover, room in our hearts for another honouring of voluntary service. We may have been given a wrong bent, trained from childhood to zealous rivalry and the admiration of spurious greatness; we may have seen the world scorn those who serve, and flatter those who rule; yet all this false judgment and artificiality is belied in our hearts, by the sweetest and most cherished figure graven in the

memory of a man, the figure of his mother. What makes the glory, the beauty, the triumph of a true mother? Willing service. Not one of the acts which make up her life of kindness and self-denial, from the days when she bent over our cradle, to the time when, old and wearied, she reminds us by some caressing touch that we are always, to her, her little children — not one of these acts but is a witness to the beauty and sublimity of service. We have only to compare in our minds the empire founded in loving service, with that based on overbearing selfishness, and all the masks will fall away, leaving only the true life to receive our homage.

**T**HERE is something servile in tyranny, which arises from the means employed to seat its power. The ancients, in their terse and expressive psychology, designated it as impotence, and it is a wonderfully penetrating characterization. Not less profound is Tacitus's saying: *omnia serviliter pro dominatione*. On the other hand, it is a strange mistake to suppose that

those great souls who comprehend willing obedience, and choose it for their part, thereby renounce strenuous activity, freedom of will, strength of character, and descend to the rank of tools in the hands of the first chance comer. We are here on ground so seldom explored, that pitfalls are plentiful, and we must clear our way as we go.

The life of service of which Christ speaks, presupposes in a soul the greatest amount of active energy possible; for no man can live this life without first attaining the victory over self, the hardest of all victories to gain. And no one is more truly master of himself than he who obeys by his own determination; while the energy he displays in this act of self-discipline, but increases the more his power of resisting attempts at coercion on the part of others. He who is master of himself, has no other man for his master; he who yields voluntary obedience, escapes restraint from without. Look at history! From among such men — the humble, the upright, the poor, men of no account in the world's eyes — have come the most indomitable



of mortals. They submit to conscience, their conscience submits to no man.

It is these men of service who attain to the most effective and the most enduring power, power based on the voluntary allegiance, the confidence, and the sympathy of their fellow-men. Their attractive force is incalculable. They are the indestructible rock against which violence shatters itself and falls harmlessly away, but toward which everything in need of strength gravitates. The moment they attain to power, their spirit and their will begin to permeate the lives of others. That impregnable fortress, the human heart, to which violence has never yet possessed the key, opens of itself to them. These are *the great*, and whoever recognizes their power, shares in their greatness and himself becomes free. Like the yoke of Jesus, their yoke is light, emancipating him who wears it. Who does not see that just here is resolved the old problem of liberty and authority? But to arrive at the solution, how many things are needful that the world ignores!

THE saying that nations have the rulers they deserve, though open to question, has a share of truth, and is of the greatest significance; applied to individuals, it is still more just. Each one of us is under the sway of the power he deserves to be ruled by, a power that by tyrannizing over him, abases him, or by serving him, lifts him up. And the mass of us have a fatal tendency for which punishment is visited upon us from generation to generation:— *We smite the hand that caresses us, and kiss the hand that smites.* That a man is haughty, harsh, even cruel, is a reason for respecting him: if he is kind, fraternal, demands nothing, effaces himself and becomes the servant of others, he risks bringing obloquy upon himself. It is a discouraging perversity, and as long as we continue to display it, relations among men will be false, and it will not be safe to count too much upon the outward and visible triumph of that greatness of which Jesus speaks.

**T**HE despair of pedagogues is the child who has ears but hears not, and eyes, but does not see,— a child feather-brained or dull, without the power of concentration, through whose mind instruction slips without lodging. The disciples of Jesus were, in many ways, like such children. Even to the end of His life on earth, they did not understand Him. It was then that He gave up teaching them by words, and fixed their attention by a pathetic symbol, into which He rounded His whole soul and life; He instituted the Lord's supper: and almost at the same moment, He performed for them the service of a slave, in the washing of their feet. And on the morrow, He did more than this, He died; and through it all ran the one purpose — that they might know, that they might understand!

The Apostles, slow to comprehend Jesus, and quick to misinterpret His intentions, have had more successors in the church than has Jesus himself. We might ask whether if churchmen had deliberately set about misconstruing the lessons of

these examples from the past, it could have led to more distressing results than are recorded in certain pages of the Church's history. In the fierce ambition to domineer, to monopolize, to direct both temporally and spiritually, to brutally penetrate the sanctuary of conscience, I fail to recognize my idea of Christ, the servant of all. And must I confess it? I recognize Him as little in the wilful pretension to be the only true Church, which periodically comes to light in some one of the numerous Protestant sects. Neither to prevail through the splendid pomp and pageantry of an outward unity, nor to be in the right where others are in the wrong, suffices to make men the disciples of Christ: all these things are vanity in God's eyes. It needs the teachable spirit, love of the hidden life of fruitfulness, of the paths little frequented, along which those walk who have a comprehension of the suffering God, and of the Man of Sorrows who has given us His human interpretation.

Oh! to help, to relieve, to serve! to be unseen, unknown, yet full of a hidden activity, working as

the unseen God works; and to rejoice in the good we have done in secret, as the Father rejoices, who, without betraying his presence, does good to all His children! — this is life, this is happiness! An impenetrable veil separates this world of felicity from selfish and overbearing men. Would that Christians, by living among these sacred realities, might bring them under the eyes of those who are not moved by words, but whom the sight of such a life might perhaps touch; would that on this earth, which the cruel and bloody god of selfishness fills with ruin and tears, they might be messengers of another Majesty, and that through loving service they might themselves receive more and more of that saving revelation which renews and heals, begets life, and vanquishes death!

### III

## MINE AND THINE

It is more blessed to give than to receive.  
ACTS XX. 35.

**T**HIS saying is reported by Paul, as a saying of Jesus, yet we should vainly search for it in the Gospels. What a pity, if it had not escaped oblivion! for after its own fashion it sums up the whole Gospel teaching. Many sayings of this nature have been too often neglected; Christians of the present as well as of the past leaving them aside, in order to dwell in particular upon those which contain great dogmatic assertions or elucidate what it is customary to call — though with scant propriety — the truths of Christianity. In all this there is

lack of vision, and even a real misconception of the essential spirit of Christianity. The kingdom of God, Jesus has said, does not appear in outward deeds and exploits; the kingdom of God is within us.

These little sayings, so simple and unpretentious, offering themselves in the form of maxims, have this in common with little stars, that they are worlds without the fact appearing. Like the Master who uttered them, they hide the splendour of divine truth under a humble exterior. Worthy as they are at any time to attract our attention, there is special need of listening to them in this age; for we are in revolt against so many conceptions which have long served as the outward form of Christianity, we live in a world so given over to moral disorder, that it is time for a return to first principles. Our faith, to recover strength enough to launch out into the invisible, has need of a baptism in experimental truths, those truths which alone ever have been or ever can be, for any of us, the foundation stones of

the edifice of our religious convictions and trust. It would seem unnecessary to enunciate so simple a truth, but of reality, even the most positive and the most evident, we possess no more than we have ourselves assimilated. To suppose that we can put ourselves into contact with God, with the enduring life and the objects of men's faith, by a simple operation of the intellect, is an error and a delusion. We must live the Gospel in order to possess it, make conquest of it by incorporating it in our wills.

**O**NE of the gravest sources of hatred and unbrotherly dispute among men, has always been property; the question of mine and thine is the great question. We can scarcely live in peace save among those with whom we have no dealings in this matter; for wherever it is concerned it is enough to embroil everybody, even the nearest relatives.

Here would seem to be a vast field of action for the Christian in his office of mediator, if we



may judge by the cupidity of claimants and the obstinate self-interest of possessors; but in order to determine his own course, and arrive at any result, he must know what stand to take, and form a very clear conception of his aim; when he has found the right point of view, it remains for him to preach by example; that is the one truly efficacious manner of speaking to the world.

It would seem to us that in these bickerings over mine and thine, the highest and most truly Christian standpoint is indicated in this maxim of paradoxical aspect, at which the sages of the world derisively smile:— *It is more blessed to give than to receive.*

**A**LL life rests upon change and counter-change. Nature in all her products, receives and gives, and human life obeys the same laws. But that conscious being, man, having a will, may ally himself with one of these functions in preference to the other, thus destroy-

ing their equilibrium; and one of the most vicious of tendencies, responsible for endless disorder and unhappiness, is the tendency to be always receiving.

There are men who reduce existence to an affair of accounts. On all occasions, in all matters, whether the interests involved be material or spiritual, their calculating faculty is upon the alert. To them the absolute and unqualified *Good* is known as *receiving*; the evil, error, calamity, is *giving*. Do not confound them with the avaricious; avarice is a religion that has not abolished sacrifice. The miser is a fanatic, the victim of an inexorable divinity to whom he immolates everything, including himself. His god is gold, but the god of the men of whom we are speaking is self. The miser uproots from his nature, as intolerable vices, all costly wants, and is deaf to all cries, even those of his own outraged instincts. It is not so with selfish men. When their person is to be the recipient, they comprehend the sweetness of giving, and give to themselves everything in their

power, exercising their ingenuity to invent new benefits for their protégé, feeling meanwhile movements of generosity within them, which would make them most faithful disciples of Christ, were they but to love their neighbours as themselves. But we must be more explicit, and view the matter as it presents itself in practical every-day life.

He would make a great mistake who should search for the odious people we have been describing, among the rich and well-to-do alone. The love for pennies may be as frenzied as the love for millions, and a man may be as selfish in poverty as in wealth. The rage for gain, for turning everything to one's own profit, is not gauged by the sums involved; it is entirely a matter of tendency. People are found in all classes of society who, if we may so express it, are *mad for possession*. It is a rage they have in common with wild beasts, considering what is theirs as prey to be defended tooth and nail. The glint of satisfaction in their eyes when they regard their own

goods, becomes a flash of hatred when they regard their neighbour. Here is their rival, their enemy!

However, if it be permitted to make comparison between actions that fall under one condemnation, I should stigmatize the selfishness of the poor more deeply than that of the rich. To be happy and lack nothing; to enjoy, through our own labour or that of our fathers, a life of ease and abundance, and yet to give nothing of this earned or inherited wealth; to forget that we are men and brothers, and that simple justice imposes certain duties upon us — this may be our common daily life, but it remains none the less shameful with an eternal shame, forever a fresh affront offered to God and man.

But to be poor, to feel the pinch of poverty, or to have felt it, with all its train of miseries; to know what goes on in the hearts of fathers and mothers, when little children are cold and hungry and there is nothing with which to warm

them and feed them; to experience these things, yet suffer only for yourself; to close your hand when better days come and you might open it — this is infamous, and to arrive at such a state, you must be more inhuman than the selfish man of fortune. He has at least this excuse, that he has never undergone the privations of the poor.

**I**N the world of the affections, we find, under another guise, the same tendency to be always receiving. There are two ways of seeking the happiness that comes through the delicate sentiments of the heart, and the most ordinary is the one employed by those whose great desire is to be loved, cherished, pampered by others. They look to those around them for everything they have. Some children — and by no means always the very young — become so used to expecting everything from their parents that the thought of returning some of these good gifts of affection, never comes into their minds. They bask in the beneficent tenderness as birds

do in the sunshine, without ever a suspicion that those who give so unsparingly, have need of like gifts in their turn — that these hearts to whose love they owe everything, are perhaps suffering in secret or bearing heavy burdens without complaint; some sudden event, very likely a misfortune, must come to reveal these things, or they will never be perceived.

The same tendency is to be found everywhere, in the selfishness of the sick, the aged, the man of science, the religious man. Yes, the religious man. He may toil for the salvation of his own soul, with an absolutely hard heart. The question of comparative religion often arises, and discussions are frequent as to what a Christian is. Men have various ways of testing these points, but there is only one good way, only one infallible criterion, and it is this:— Withdraw into yourself. Take up one after another your hopes, your convictions; pass your sentiments in review; take account of the spirit of your prayers. If, after this, you find that you are given more to thinking of others, to lov-

ing, to devoting yourself, in short, to simply bestowing, than to asking or looking to a recompense, have no fear; your religion is the right one; in spite of your imperfections, your mistakes, and your sins, you are of the company that Christ has called disciples and friends. But if your religion is occupied exclusively with *your* personal salvation, *your* spiritual perfection, *your* fate after death, the reward that shall crown *your* piety and *your* works, and if your neighbour has little place in it, then, though you be true and faithful, irreproachable in doctrine and even in life, your religion is not the right one; for it is lacking in the very essence of true religion — the gift of self.

And yet, having done with those whose only thought is to receive, we must speak a word for the art of receiving. And first, man's condition being such that he must needs often count upon his fellows, it is good to know how to receive with simplicity and gratitude. The attempt, by de-

clining all favours, to be beholden to no one, contract no debt of thankfulness, is a signal of misplaced pride, and it is also an indication of ignorance and narrow-mindedness. Who is he that owes no one anything? What do we possess that we have not received either from God or from men? Let us frankly acknowledge the truth, and bend — I will not say with humility, but with a perfectly good grace — before this sacred law of fellowship and interdependence, through which the individual is nothing by himself, but must have the assistance of others. To know how to receive, is an excellent foundation for the art of giving; for who, after receiving with gratitude, is not ready to give with joy? And let us as a matter of principle fall in with the kind intentions of others, giving them a chance to act in accordance with their nature, and fear to discourage our friends, our children, those nearest and dearest to us, from offering us tokens of their affection.



**I**T is not our intention to speak lightly of property, or of the right of the individual to call certain possessions his own. Property is at the bottom of the social state, and to destroy the title to it, would be to sacrifice the individual, deprive him of his rights. But should the injustice of such a course not appeal to us, there would be yet another reason for keeping our hands off this necessary piece of social machinery. Suppose we were deprived of this powerful stimulus to action, should we be sure to find men of such absolute devotion and unselfishness, that they would labour for the public good with as much ardour as they now display in their own interests? How, out of the present social state, wherein selfishness rules, should we bring forth a world in which disinterestedness is triumphant? Property, then, will remain, because it is both a right and a need. But it must never be forgotten that all good things may become corrupted through abuse. Property, like all else pertaining to man, has this double character, inherent in our nature,

that it is individual and it is social. Possession is in part the exercise of a social function; to divert it exclusively to private interests, to possess property but not brotherly love, is to pervert our rights and turn use into abuse. All that a man says, does, suffers, neglects, has both an individual and a social bearing. He has no right to leave out of account the consequences which his acts may have for his brothers, and hence come the important and sacred duties imposed upon us by property. Property in the hands of the selfish makes for evil, and brings its own retribution in the degradation it entails. The doctrine of an elect plutocracy, reduces to stagnation both the man and his wealth. Here comes in, as a corrective to the right of possession, the duty of giving, transformed full soon into a blessed privilege by those who practise it rightly.

**A**S there are men and women for whom the whole world contracts to a single point, self, so are there those whose inner life is inspired by a kind of expansive movement which bears them away from themselves, urges them to the gift of themselves. They have, either naturally, or acquired and developed by their will, that quality to which philosophers give the singular name of altruism, and which the Gospels call charity. Their thought goes out to others, habitually and kindly, sometimes even beyond reason, in that they show more love to their neighbours than they do to themselves. Receiving is passive, giving active, and the moment the art of giving becomes more than superficial, there begins to be mingled with every gift, the meanest as well as the most esteemed, some trifling part of the giver. We give a little of ourselves when we *give*, in truth, at all.

Here we touch upon a fact of far-reaching significance, which we shall presently attempt to

bring into relief. Let us content ourselves now with saying that if receiving is one of the laws of life, it is the lower law; the higher law is giving. Call up with me for a moment that beautiful image which has so often tempted the artist's brush, yet without losing any of its intrinsic novelty — the mother nursing her child. The child is all receptive, using his natural right unconsciously, with naïve grace; but the mother gives with the full exercise of heart and will; and giving is everywhere as superior to receiving, as, in this nurturing function, the mother, who plays her part to the full measure of her will and love, is superior to the child, moved only by the instinct of self-preservation. Giving is the key to the deep mystery of goodness and kindness — the secret of that infinite pity whose joy is to give itself in each of its gifts. But before we pursue the matter to these far and lofty heights, let us stop to consider some of the circumstances of giving through which man divines these mysteries of the higher life.

There are men that, through their own exertions or by accident of birth, hold a privileged position, having wealth, power, and influence in their hands, whom, nevertheless,—instead of strengthening in them the sentiments of self-interest,—these gifts of effort or of fortune have made humble. They are not a part of their possessions and their power; the man in them outranks the magnate; their wealth is fraternal, their power magnanimous. In proportion as they have risen, they have grown modest; and moreover, becoming indifferent, in the praiseworthy sense of the word, to the world's honours and rewards, they appreciate, above all its other gifts, the opportunity it offers for doing good. Their happiness lies in aiding others, in remembering the forgotten, defending the down-trodden; and even thanklessness — in this are they like our Heavenly Father — does not stay their benefactions; the joy of giving is their compensation.

**M**ORE appealing than these, are the poor and the unfortunate who give. Jesus said: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Be sure that His spirit is also present wherever those who suffer concern themselves with the suffering of others. The widow's mite is not an exceptional gift, made once in the distant past; it is a gift ever repeated, that keeps the world from becoming quite out of joint. For it is not alone the poor man's bread broken with him who is poorer still, the sick watched and cared for by companions in misery, the orphan received into straitened households; it is also, in the moral world, the gift of pity and sympathy which we offer each other when, alternately weak and strong, merry or sad, fortunate or unfortunate, we make the effort, in our times of trial, to associate our modest means, in order to aid one another the better to bear our burdens. In encouraging another, consoling him, calming his fear, wiping away his tears—in all these things we experience the great blessedness of giving.

**T**HIS blessedness is known also to those who, rich in understanding and wisdom, do not make their knowledge the instrument of their own selfish ends or ambitions, but love to share their treasure. If the dew of morning had a conscious spirit, and knew the good it does to Nature's myriads of green blades and thirsty flowers, with what joy would it not fall! There is a certain other beneficent dew which descends upon a thirsty land: it is knowledge, light, truth, when communicated to the little ones, or to the ignorant; and those who are the workers of this deed of salvation, know in the midst of their labours a joy that the world dreams not of!

**B**UT as yet we are only on the outskirts of that land whose native practice is the joyous gift of self. Let us penetrate within it.

He who knows how to interpret this fact, so real, so indisputable — the fact of the joy of giving — holds the secret of the means whereby we shall one day put an end to the application among

men of the principle of the “struggle for existence.” Where giving commences, the merciless and brutal conflict in which “the fittest” triumph, ends. The sole solution — and how admirable it is! — of the social question, is to be found in that world of ideas and actions wherein it is counted *more blessed to give than to receive*. To bring about a better state of things in the world, it is not enough that there be thousands and tens of thousands ready to share the wealth of others — the more there are of such men, the less shall we advance. A desire for the possessions of others is not the virtue to save society and become the foundation of justice; that saving virtue will come to us from hearts more disposed to give than to receive, and readier to devote themselves to the good of others than to lay claim to their own personal rights. If it does not come from them, we shall never see it.— What power would be given into the hands of Christians, if they were fully persuaded of this truth, and made it the basis of their lives and their creeds!



Until that day comes, it is their duty to be ready with an example of self-detachment. There is a certain fashion of defending one's rights which vitiates even the best of them. If there are men who soil their hands with the possessions of others, there are many more who besmirch their own possessions by defending their right to them with such passion as to become unjust in the very act of demanding justice. Oh the dissensions, the disputes, the harsh feeling, aroused among those who should love one another, by this wretched question of mine and thine! Might we not soften a little the rigours of law, relax a little our grasp on what belongs to us, make gladly those little sacrifices of material wealth which may save us the sacrifice of friendship, of good understanding, of domestic happiness — possessions worth so much more than those for which we are in danger of relinquishing them?

LET us go further still, following to their extreme consequences the two tendencies in question.

My mind turns to that monstrous but too common thing, a life given over entirely to receiving, possessing, selfishly enjoying — a life whose sole end is personal gratification, and that, in general, attains it. But a fatal result of such a life is the abnormal development of the personality, so that it offers a greatly increased number of points of attack to the powers of destruction. When their work begins, what is the egoist to do? He has resisted well enough the tender appeals of his nature that he devote himself to others; but here are sensations of another sort. The years and their events begin to assail him, blow upon blow, and he feels that he is being slowly undermined. All life, all hope, all reality, are compassed within this *me*, and it is beginning to lose its hold. This being, bound to the earth by every fibre, is torn away from it, in the midst of a thousand pangs. Die, under these circumstances? It is the end of

everything! And this is the heart-rending spectacle which the old age of an egoist presents, without ideals, without affection, ending in pessimism and despair.

How much more inspiring, in the fine serenity of its declining years, is the life of him who has been self-sacrificing! As the days have gone by, he has become weaned from self-love, out of sympathy for others, and has learned to forget himself. His life centres outside of things personal to him and above them; he clings to these things less and less. His old age rejoices in the youth of those he loves, without envy, and when the day comes to leave his own, his whole life has been a preparation for it. He gives up his soul to God, and accepts death with simplicity; for he knows that what he loses is the narrow, cramped life, beyond whose confines his soul has been forever straining. For him death is an escape from all that is transient into the world of things enduring, and the sense of a

divine life within him frees him from all fear of its power.

Jesus said, and His word shall be fulfilled to the letter: *Whosoever would save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.*

## IV

### SCIENCE AND FAITH

Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

I THESS. v. 21.

We walk by faith, not by sight.

II COR. v. 7.

**W**E have a saying, "Who listens to but one bell, hears but one sound." The fact is incontestable, but I pity the man condemned to listen simultaneously to two bells that clash, without feeling any too sure — so true does each tone seem — which summons he ought to obey.

Nevertheless, this is the present situation of every candid man, who would not disregard any source of information which might lead to peace

of soul and certitude of mind. On the one hand, he hears voices saying that science is the pathway to truth; from the other comes a no less insistent cry:—“Have a care! Science promises what she cannot fulfil; for truth, look to faith!” “Observe, handle, measure, weigh, admit nothing but what is proved scientifically,” is the watchword of the first camp; “Do not seek to know too much, or scrutinize facts too closely; you will lose peace of heart without gaining peace of mind. There is a revealed truth, and its guardianship is in our hands. It has endured from of old; it sufficed your fathers; accept it with confidence, and find peace!” — this is the admonition of the second. Those who champion science exclusively, disparage faith as a superstitious weakness, unworthy of vigorous minds; while those whose championship is exclusively for faith, speak of science as a vainglorious if not impious undertaking. Flatter contradiction and more radical exclusion would be hard to find; and in view of so marked a contrast, it would

seem as if there were nothing to do but choose. *One or the other!* — apparently the dilemma resolves itself. But, alas, it is not so! for he who would preserve his whole birthright as man, following out all the leadings of his nature, finds himself equally sensible of the attractions and the legitimacy of these two tendencies. His choice would be to follow both; not separately and alternately — keeping them apart from each other, in different spheres of his inner life — but, on the contrary, together, that, through association of his efforts in the two directions, he might the better accomplish his task.

If, in an honest attempt, so far as in us lies, to turn away from all our prejudices and preconceptions, we should look for truth alone, listening to the cry of all the needs and aspirations within us, and trying to satisfy them, perhaps we should find, that between two realms so profoundly human as the realm of science and the realm of faith, there is less discrepancy and more connection than we had supposed.

**A**N ardent curiosity awakes in man, at the very beginning of his conscious life, and even before. Look at the child; he is an investigator always at his task. He notices everything, wants to touch and taste everything. To repress this natural ardour is to arrest his normal development, to work against his good — even against the power which has willed that we should be what we are. What his curiosity wants is encouragement, and in time it will become that noble thirst for knowledge which is the torment of the best of mankind. Out of this eagerness and this activity, science is born. Let us try to ascertain its rôle and its place.

Science consists in the explanation and methodic classification of all intelligible facts and phenomena. At once it is necessary to establish a distinction here; the classification is infinitely more extensive than the explanation. A multitude of facts which up to the present time have resisted all analysis, belong none the less to the realm of science. She catalogues them, and even makes use



of them, without understanding them. And this is very natural; for, the field of science being all the intelligible, it covers many unexplored provinces, which must be the subject of the experiment and research of the future. No one has as yet set foot in them; and no doubt there are regions whose existence is not even suspected; while along the well-known and beaten paths, we find many a dark cranny filled with doubt and question.

In spite of all this, the ground conquered is considerable. Comparing it with the limitations of human power, we may even say that the work of scientific research and discovery has attained gigantic proportions. All the material conditions of human life have been transformed, and the conditions of thought have undergone profound modifications. We operate with other forces than did the ancients; the world of our fathers is no longer our world.

Each one of the conquests of science — whose total does the greatest honour to humanity, and ought to increase our security and our power for

good — has been the fruit of long and patient research, and many of them have been made at the cost of blood. Thanks to so much devotion and sacrifice, on the part of men who, in general, have reaped little benefit from it themselves, we possess advantages that we cannot recall without feelings of gratitude.

The marvellous results that have come from the efforts of these men, have gained for science universal admiration. Even its detractors do it homage, and homage the more to be prized, in that it is involuntary. They speak ill of it while availing themselves of its benefits. These facts are general, evident, and not to be depreciated.

And yet, does this splendid situation of science justify the claim — put forth by some of its champions — that it must be from henceforth man's sole law and his sole source of knowledge? Have we within our power no other means of arriving at truth than scientific experiment, and — to push the matter more closely home — is the intellect the only means of access to man for real-

ity? Does all of man centre in mind? When he has made the circuit of those things which the mind can grasp, can he live on what he then knows? These are imperative questions. Upon examining, not its methods — which may well serve outside the domain of pure science — but the indubitable results that science furnishes us, we perceive that they all belong in the same category, namely, in the realm of mechanics or of pure mathematics. Everything outside these limits is inexplicable. Science may classify it, turn it to use, but she can neither comprehend it nor make it comprehensible.

But mechanics and the science of numbers scarcely go beyond the form of things; the substance of things eludes them. Even through phenomena which she has analysed and can reproduce at will, science is able to give no positive information as to the nature of either matter or force, the two things, it would seem, most evident and most tangible, and which even have a place in the domain of metaphysics; while the

things belonging to the realm of physics which seem simplest to the masses, as light and heat, become, from the scientific standpoint, *mysteries*, so that we laboriously arrive at the conclusion that we do not know anything, and that what is evidence to a common mortal is enigma to the man of science.

Let us go on and upward, by degrees, to the threshold of life. Where is the step from inorganic to organic nature? Let us have some example, even the simplest, attested by the evidence of scientific research, of how a cell originates and why. But this the specialists in the subject tell us they do not know. Life, even the lowest vegetable life, is at a height to which they have not yet attained; no ray of scientific light has penetrated its mysterious laboratory. Yet this great unknown thing is at the bottom of all the natural sciences from vegetable physiology to the physiology of man.

In this night, complete enough already, the

darkness deepens as the phenomena grow complicated, and organs and functions become further differentiated. With animal life, the nervous system appears, and with it irritability, sensation, and the motor reactions of the being upon its surroundings. What is the vegetable cell? Mystery. But what is the nerve cell? Mystery more profound. Its most elemental property, sensibility, far from admitting of explanation, defies definition itself. And this takes us no further than the humblest beginnings of animal life. When we come to the brain, not yet that of man, but, for instance, of one of the quadrupeds, science can only grope about.

Yet these obscurities are as the midday clearness in comparison with those which appear with human life. We know what metals are found in the sun or in Sirius, but our scientific resources do not permit us to observe the workings of the human brain; and in studying the material part of man, with the aid of all the highly perfected instruments of modern science, we are not able to discover that

he has a thought, an emotion, or a sensation. *The eye sees*, but science cannot establish the fact. We know it of ourselves, by internal observation, as we know that we exist; but science is not equipped to demonstrate it. There are a good many men who suppose that from acquaintance with cerebral topography, the localization of functions, the minute photography and the micrography of the various parts of the brain, certain scientists have come to know it as a watchmaker knows a watch; but nothing is wider from the truth.

Suppose a number of men thoroughly versed in all the knowledge of modern science, but with no notion whatever of Greek, should find a Homer, and say among themselves, "Let us see what there is in this volume." They would count, measure, and compare the letters, submit the pages to various chemical and mechanical tests, and so collect a multitude of acute observations and ingenious conjectures. But after all their labour, what would they know of Homer? In the matter of colour and

form, the combinations of letters, the composition and consistency of the ink and paper, the number of accents, verses and pages, they could set forth a great array of facts hitherto unsuspected; but of Homer they would know nothing whatever. All this world of thought and feeling and artistic beauty, would remain for them a sealed book. This is a picture of what experimental physiology achieves with man, when confined to its own observations. Everybody who has given any serious attention to these questions knows that between physiology, the study of the outer man,—man subject to the laws of the senses and of the physical organism behind them,—and psychology, the study of the phenomena of the inner man, there is an abyss that no one as yet has crossed. Abandoned to itself, exact science is condemned to impotence.

But a truce to this. Let us suppose that science is able to establish her base, the intellect; that she has fathomed and thoroughly investigated it, and

knows its relations to the functions of the brain, and that — a further concession, and one quite as important — of all things comprehensible in the universe, nothing has escaped her. Here is science in full possession of the organ of knowledge, and of all the knowledge within its scope; has she now exhausted man's nature? By no means. Limited to the acquaintance of those things within the range of the intellect, she is excluded from a whole world of realities that man encounters daily, and from whose provision he lives. The vast domain of the conscience, for example, remains closed to her; for no man can establish scientifically a single fact regarding it.

**W**HAT are the inevitable conclusions to be drawn from all this? It seems to me that we have a right to sum up the situation thus:— Science has its own domain, and this domain has been partially explored. Although the accumulation of scientific knowledge is already prodigious, and beyond the power of any one in-



tellec to acquire, this is only the beginning of the conquest of the scientific world. But this world itself is only a part of another world, to which man has within him the possibilities of entrance. Let us fasten this in our thoughts by a comparison.

To realize and take hold on the material world, man has a number of senses, each adapted to a different manifestation of things. The sense of sight perceives light, the hearing, sound; but the attributes of these senses are so different, that the one is totally unresponsive to the phenomena which come within the province of the other. So, also, man has different fashions of conceiving the world, which complete each other, but cannot be substituted for one another. Each has its own peculiar domain. Conscience is a sense open to a world which to reason is unknown, just as reason looks out upon a world that is closed to the senses. To raise science to the position of the unique source of certitude, is to ask man to renounce all these other sources of information. It is a very grave matter, more grave than to pluck out our

eyes and destroy the nerve of hearing, that we may say to the touch, Thou alone shalt guide me!

**I**T is well to be always on guard against tendencies to exclusion, for though they have their proper use, they are apt to lead us astray, as all the attempts of asceticism prove. The object of asceticism is the sublimation of human nature, but the inevitable result of it is degeneration. It produces an artificial and morbid existence, which obstructs the harmonious adjustment of life to such a degree that in the end the practice is engulfed in its own consequences. By its fruits it is judged. To attempt to constitute science the only source whence humanity shall draw its certitude, is to attempt to establish an asceticism of a new sort, and again to undertake one of those famous mutilations of man's nature which have always brought infirmities upon it, and tortured it into aberrations and monstrosities. Who can deny that we are even now attainted with the consequences of this evil? Among the intellectual élite of society, they show

themselves in barrenness of life, scepticism, the lowering of energy, and decrease in the joy of living, and, by a vengeful reaction of violated nature, in a morbid straining after strange and unaccustomed sensations and emotions. Denied its natural aliment, the soul, in its ardent thirst, seeks for substitutes and encounters poisons.

As to the masses, superficially acquainted with scientific and intellectual life, artlessly persuaded that everything is known to certain privileged persons, whom they suppose to be the incarnation of omniscience, and perceiving that these people reject and deny whatever cannot be seen or touched, they are assailed by a natural enough temptation, to which many of them succumb. Renounce hope of a morrow, it says, and live for to-day; seek pleasure, at any cost. And so the lower appetites are fostered.

We should be wrong, in enumerating these extreme cases, to pass over a painful and very interesting state of mind, from which we might well take warning. There are numbers of men among

our contemporaries, whose habit of living with only reason for their guide has given them a certain malady, a sort of languor of the whole being, of a kind that shows itself wherever humanity is tortured on the Procrustean bed of some exclusive system. These men approach everything in the spirit of scientific analysis, and wherever this analysis is inapplicable, and consequently can discover nothing, they conclude that there is nothing to discover. The heart with its infinite riches of sentiment, the conscience with its scruples, all the elusive poesy that makes the essence and fragrance of things, they banish from the world of reality. Reason, which is called *cold*, because outside its own domain it kills and destroys, as does every misdirected force, remains sole mistress, obeyed but detested. All the legitimate instincts and sentiments that have been sacrificed to it have turned into griefs, so that reality seems sad, dull, a mockery. The world has become a great, frightful emptiness, and a perpetual regret dwells silent in the depths of the heart. Over all the with-

ered flowers, the lost hopes and loves and illusions, breathes the great sadness of a lost belief.

This regret does not always remain mute and resigned; sometimes it becomes exasperation, and takes shape in a revolt against reason, and a desperate return toward the things of the past, with the cry that ignorance with happiness is better than knowledge with death.

What have we to learn from this suffering, that so many of our contemporaries — and some of the best among them — undergo? It should teach us to judge justly, and to have respect for everything that is native and spontaneous in man's nature.

Science does not suffice us. Man does not live by what she teaches him, nor can he. It is not the paucity of his scientific knowledge that prevents it, but man is something else than an intelligence, and needs other things than this knowledge for his life. This affirmation is more comprehensive than it may appear. Some people are quite ready to concede that, within the vast space we assign to

science, it is well to reserve a corner, in order that we may not banish too summarily certain things which cannot be demonstrated, it is true, yet which may, nevertheless, be realities. This is not our view of the matter. We hold that, parallel with science, and possessing equal claims with it, man has quite other means of perceiving and laying hold on reality. Let us take examples from that sphere of life embracing morals and the affections.

We are in daily activity in this sphere, and face to face with facts. Good, evil, friendship, devotion, love, — what are all these? From the scientific standpoint, they are nothing at all. Why, then, do so many men, who have renounced in theory everything that science does not embrace, continue to live as if all these things were real? Is it out of deference to the ignorance of the public? Is it from prudence, in order that the foundations of the social fabric and the family may not crumble? Not at all. For the most part, these men have given too plain proof of sincerity, even of radicalness, to

incur the reproach of hypocrisy. If they act as they do, it is because they have remained men, and that it is out of their power to help possessing in fact sources of information and experience which they repudiate in theory. They act with that happy want of consequence which has done so much good and prevented so much harm, that we ask ourselves if, instead of calling it a weakness, as the strong-minded do, it were not more proper to range it in the number of virtues.

However, let us go on. You may say that we attach too much importance to these inconsequent procedures; that by exception, and with an inward smile, men yield, here and there, to these so-called reasonings of the heart, of which the reason proper is not cognizant, but that this does not amount to a proof. Besides, those who follow instinct and passion, in opposition to the counsels of reason, do the same thing without being credited with superior motives. Then let us turn elsewhere for an example.

Here is one, chosen, not like the other, from in-

dividual life, but from social life, that its application may be wide enough to stand upon its own basis. If there is a subject of our forethought wholly absurd from the strictly scientific standpoint, it is the provision we make for the care of the feeble, the wretched, and all those poor mutilations of men that are cast up like wrecks along the coasts of life. The ancients pitilessly eliminated all such sufferers, from birth — unless we prefer to think that they acted out of pity. From the scientific point of view, we should return to their practices. In the combat of life, make way for the powerful, the robust! Theirs be the empire and the joy of living! Out of the way with the feeble — Nature's disgraced children!

This is *logic*, and all natural science moves us in this direction, especially the lessons to be drawn from plants and animals. Then why do we not heed them? Is it from delicacy? We must needs deliberately set out to court ridicule, if we suggest that the present age is deterred from anything on that ground. Shall we then suppose it to be in-



fluenced by some sort of calculation ? Remembering that good has come from among these sufferers, perhaps men fear to cut off in the sickly bud some life whose blighted body conceals a great soul. But then, why burden ourselves with all the feeble-minded, that riffraff of mankind, wandering or vacant in thought, and rickety in body ? Why keep here, at the expense of so much care and skill, and so many sacrifices, these poor creatures, already more dead than alive, upon whom the clods beneath which we sleep, would fall more lightly than does the burden of existence ?

We face here a condition wherein we find all our laws and institutions, and the whole modern spirit, flagrantly at variance with science. From the scientific point of view, our action here is *unadulterated folly*. It gives us so much the more pleasure to make this point, in that Science, in the persons of many of her most illustrious representatives, and by means of her discoveries, puts herself at the service of this work, scientifically so indefensible, and

displays in its behalf the same zeal as do those who draw their inspiration from very different sources.

Let us acknowledge it, confess it with our lips, — there are other certitudes than those presented in the conclusion of a syllogism or the terms of an equation. With the mysterious assurance of a sense that never errs, something tells us to run to the assistance of the weak and the unfortunate; something tells us that the most wretched and miserable of all, and the most afflicted, are made sacred, as it were, by their misfortune. They are bone of our bones, and flesh of our flesh! — our fraternity cries it out from the depths of our compassion. The suffering of these wounded members of our common humanity is made the suffering of us all, and it is through this fact that the last become first among us, and that violence to the weak, harshness to the infirm, or brutality to children, is, in our eyes, the crime of crimes.

**W**HAT is duty? For Science, no such thing exists; for it is impossible to analyse it, or to find it a rational basis.

At the end of her utmost effort in this direction, the furthest that science can reach, is to the ethics of utility. Let duty go to the length of sacrifice, and it becomes only so much the more puzzling; for from the point of view of rational calculation, a martyr is an unbalanced being, who has lost the true sense of things, a visionary, a madman, and the finest actions descend to the rank of mere pathological manifestations. Is it not significant that the most singular of all the anomalies in this order of ideas should be martyrdom in behalf of science? And this science, for which so many men have died and so many will yet die, has no other category in which to put her most sublime servitors than that in which she puts lunatics! Thus, by an absurdity, does she furnish proof that man does not live by knowledge alone. We might push this inquiry further, but after rendering every deserved tribute to science for the distinguished services she

renders, we should still be obliged to recognize the fact that the forces which lead the world onward are chiefly without her domain.

**B**UT the world of the conscience, as well as that of scientific knowledge, leads to a realm beyond itself; both are landmarks on the way to *Faith*. We shall dispense with a denunciation of the faith called authoritative, which offers man a complete system of the universe, while forbidding him to satisfy himself as to its own solidity; the faith which addresses itself to man's presentiment of infinite realities, with the purpose of imposing upon him mysteries of human fabrication; the faith which is science gone wrong, describing, explaining, and laying bare matters that no man can comprehend. In presenting what we understand by faith, what it is in its essence, we shall have sufficiently removed all misconceptions.

In the realm of science, as in that of mind and in that of conscience, every fact looks toward some

conclusion, every detail points to some whole, every revelation vouchsafed us announces something to follow it. The things we know, lure us toward the unknown, and the more realities we encounter in the diverse domains our humanity opens to us, the more familiar do we become with the profound law in accordance with which all things hold together and have sequence. Like those flowers that epitomize a climate, from the intensity of its sunlight to the nature of its soil, man is a microcosm, in whom are to be found traces of everything that exists. Little by little we come to have a very distinct idea that we hold in our hands, in the existence that has been decreed for us here, the clues to an endless development; the premises under our eyes call for conclusions beyond the range of our vision.

The intuition of science, in whose direction her discoveries are incessantly bearing her, is of the infinitely great and the infinitely small, and both are as certain, to her conception, as they are inaccessible. Astronomy conceives of infinite space,

in proportion to which the commensurable extent of the known universe, with all the bodies, all the life, all the marvels it contains, is as zero: microscopy conceives the infinitesimal in matter, beside which the minutest particle within the range of man's observation is as a universe. And it is the same with everything that man surmises or establishes; it all says to him, Onward! onward!

THE rays of a spectrum permit us to draw conclusions as to the composition of far distant stars, and likewise our inner being, properly interrogated, gives significant indications of distant realities. Within his moral consciousness, man perceives the shadowy lineaments of a world of the Beautiful, the Lovable, the Just, and once he has caught a glimpse of these elusive outlines, his heart is drawn to pursue them as the eye instinctively follows a vanishing line. After having found, at the heart of his scientific curiosity, the revelation of infinite space, he finds in his moral consciousness the revelation of infi-

nite Beauty, Justice, Love, Truth, and Life. It is the same quest, but followed along different ways; we are everywhere in pursuit of the infinite. So that the world of faith is not a hypothetical fabric, a sort of wonderland adrift from earth, but, on the contrary, it is attached to earth by a thousand bonds. *Credo quia absurdum* is not its device, but, instead, the high-souled words: *I know in whom I have put my trust*. The way may be dark and uncertain, it matters not; the compass still points north, and man's intellect and moral consciousness alike point to GOD.

THOSE who look upon the world of faith as a childish creation, no more than a vague image of reality, with which the ignorant content themselves because they know no better, are completely in the wrong. It is their idea, that whatever broadens the territory of science must narrow that of faith, until faith, driven out of retreat after retreat, like the snows in spring-time, dissolves, and at length vanishes away. The

same idea is held by certain godly men, who fear the light of science upon faith. And so the two extremes sum up the matter in the same language. *Faith is waning, faith is dying out*, they say, on the one side in accents of triumph, on the other in bitterness and grief. Ah, yes, the Christian should share in this sadness, were science, as is often affirmed, the enemy of faith, and if all that men worship, all that touches the heart or brings comfort and hope, must vanish before it into the land of chimeras. If this were the best that science could do for us, science would be barbarous, and we should say to its champions: — Give us back the poetic twilight of that beautiful and happy land wherein we moved with songs in our hearts, that land which your crude light has dissolved into vapours; give us back that familiar world, that heaven hovering near us, those miracles wherein docile Nature unbent her laws, as a tamed beast answers to the leadings of a child; give us the soul of our fathers, with its pious ecstasies, its virile virtues, its indomitable hope; and take away a sci-



ence that her own works condemn, since she leads man her laborious way, only to unveil to him, at the end, his doom of extinction! — But, happily, science is not the enemy of faith.

Doubtless certain conceptions will have to be changed; rudimentary, and only of value as repositories of faith, they could not, in the face of a transformed science, claim the privilege of immortality. But faith herself dies not. The very shadows that she enters, show, by the anxiety they cause us, how interwoven she is with the fibre of humanity. A being organized like man is made for believing, as a bird for singing, and a flower for blooming in beauty. Our life is an initiation, and science, conscience, anything that awakens us, also widens our horizon, rectifies our conception of both the outer and the inner world, and favours our development. Certain times produce certain movements which disturb the equilibrium, and threaten the whole; but an age is not history, a generation is not humanity. The period through which we are now passing is not a believing one; but it is gathering

together, without suspecting it, material for a faith hardier than ever; for it has turned pages in the book of human affairs that our fathers never reached.

**T**HE time is coming — thanks to the patient labour of those who question Nature, united to that of those who trace, through the writings and monuments of the past, the slow and painful development of the human soul — when an élite of independent believers will be able to conceive of faith on a wider basis. Such men feel, from having reconciled them in their own lives, that all our curiosity, and all our aspirations to know and to love, are good, and in perfect accord. They pray while they search, and search while they pray. Their souls are so filled with God that they perceive and adore Him in all His works, from the dust of the ground to the spirit of man. And so they join the power of science to serve the good of mankind to the splendid force of conscience and of the religious sentiment. For among

whatever people, and in whatever age, at the heart of paganism as in the breast of Israel, and in the divers divisions of the Christian Church — throughout the whole course of man's religious development — they detect the sigh of his spirit for the unknown God, and the response of this God. In the face of the imperfections, the vices, the falsehoods and weaknesses of men, they have only to contemplate the Father who loves, and the children stretching out trembling hands toward Him, to perceive and affirm with joy that everything is true in the high realm of faith. All that thou hast dreamt of, O thou poor humanity, in thy supreme struggles and long agonies; all the consolation thy soul has divined through tears and loss, through sin and death; all the tenderness and comfort thy prophets have spoken unto thee, out of compassion for thy many defeats, and all that they have sworn unto thee in the name of invisible love, is true,— a thousand times more real than the fragile form that holds it. And when time attacks this form, or shatters it, do not look within it in search

of truth, but always beyond it! So great is *being*, so profound, so rich, and so inexhaustible is *reality*, that they surpass all beliefs and all hopes.

WHEN I contemplate Nature in her splendid and unconscious life, that life which follows its appointed course without stumbling or hesitation, I notice everywhere an imperturbable security. It is the strong calm of things which are in harmony with their purpose. Only man can destroy this harmony and become a wanderer and an exile, adrift from his moorings and his law, alienated from the reason of his being, shipwrecked in doubt and despair. To be in harmony with both his reason and his heart, and with the will which is at the bottom of creation,— this is what man must attain to, ere he arrive at peace.

To search for things eternal through things temporal; to find the light through gropings in the dark; to arrive at truth by way of error, at sanctity by way of sin, at life through death, at God, the good and merciful God, the God of Jesus, by the

aid of the glimpses of Himself that He has given to our mortal eyes and our dawning conscience, — this is *the way*. Man is a wayfarer, a pilgrim of the ages, covered with the dust of them all, and torn and maimed by the obstacles of the route. Sometimes he is swallowed up in darkness and overcome by fatigue; but always he keeps on. Why has he not succumbed long ago? After so many lost battles and so much suffering, whence comes his courage? Whence rises the song of hope on his lips? There is but one possible answer to these questions: HE WALKS BY FAITH!

V

THE LOVE OF COUNTRY — HUMANITY

If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand  
forget her cunning. PSA. cxxxvii. 5.

There shall be one fold and one shepherd.  
JOHN x. 16.

**C**ATO the Censor eternally reiterated his saying, "Carthage must be destroyed," for he was convinced that the downfall of that country was necessary to the preservation and greatness of his own; we of to-day have reached the point of repeating, with a persistence worthy of the old Roman, "War must be abolished." We have begun to believe in the solidarity of nations, and to think that the prosperity of any one of them must contribute to the

welfare of the others. It is to the interest of every people that affairs in general should be conducted honourably, that labour should be plenty everywhere, and the earth bring forth its harvests. No nation has any advantage in being rich, educated, and healthy, while other nations are poor, ignorant, and plague-stricken. Evil is a menace to everybody, and is no respecter of frontiers, while blessings have wings which transport them from one country to scatter them over all the others.

Why do these ideas, which the experience of every day illustrates, make such slow headway? Why is it that only an elect minority are imbued with them, while the masses appear to believe that the destruction of one people is sometimes necessary to the life of another? These are vexing questions, but we must face them, nevertheless. Facts are facts, and while it is a gratifying truth that peace societies and courts of arbitration have gained ground in the last twenty years, that men are beginning to see what a murderous cheat war is, that patriotism is becoming in many cases less

aggressive, it is equally true that most nations, especially those of Europe, remain armed to the teeth and drain themselves dry with the expense of perfecting their materials of war, and augmenting their forces on land and sea.

All these facts, however, are but the manifestation of a hidden cause, and this cause is to be found in the minds of a deplorably large number of men. There exists in most nations, with regard to certain other nations, a spirit of mistrust, ill-will, and disparagement, more dangerous than all our engines of destruction. This spirit continues to infect the press, and in spite of real progress, which we are happy to recognize, still rages through certain venomous books; and though the public schools and the universities are beginning to discourage it, they still too often foster it instead, so that we not only find it contaminating the ignorant — of whom our thought should always be modified by the remembrance of Christ's words: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" — but, sad to say, we also observe it among scientists,



literary men, and even among men who call themselves religious. That there should be virtue, intelligence, piety, any good, in fact, among nations which are our rivals or hostile to us, is scarcely probable. At all events, it would be impolitic to acknowledge it, and unpatriotic to proclaim it. Certain shrewd political and social writers, always ready to sell their readers what they want, instead of offering them what they need, have made fortunes through the publication of books that are simply treasuries of scandal, complaisantly retailing the vices, the follies, and idiosyncrasies of our neighbours. As for anything good, you will search for it in vain. And along with these shameless methods, which are a disgrace to our contemporary literature, we have the methods of certain sheets of the press that might well be called international scandal-mongers. They bring daily food to the most evil passions by falsifying the simplest facts of the current life of neighbouring nations, assiduously unearthing every action of theirs that is tinged with dishonour, and belittling

and besmirching, with scrupulous pains, their splendid achievements and their illustrious men. What a part to play in the enlightenment of nations — asking one of them to make merry over the sins of the others, to rejoice in their dishonour, and to deny their qualities!

No man who perceives these bad tendencies should remain silent, or hesitate a moment to stem the current. From a fire smouldering beneath cinders, a great conflagration may burst forth. Let no just man hold his peace if a nation is disparaged in his presence, but let him endeavour to rectify the matter, to bear witness to the truth. Especially should he do his uttermost to set right in the minds of the people the very idea of patriotism, which is so often disfigured by narrow and inhuman views.

Astray as we are, in order to regain the right road we need to fix our eyes a while on simple facts, and refresh ourselves with elementary truths. Then let us ask ourselves what we mean by our native land, from what source the strong and

pure flood of patriotism comes, and whither it tends.

In its inception, patriotism is a joyous communion with the spot whence we spring. The flower opens to the warmth of its native sunshine; the oak grapples the soil of its birth, and draws from it its nourishment; the child smiles under the paternal roof, loves his father, his mother, and the world about him; he is steeped in the naturalness and familiarity of it all. He forms these attachments at first without knowing it, and becomes conscious of them little by little; then, gradually, through this love of home and family, the earliest form of his affection, he rises to a love more disinterested, broader and richer, — the love of country. By interchange of influence, and benefits given and received, the fatherland is ever producing the family, nourishing it from its own strength, giving it form, and inspiring its life; and the family is ever bringing the fatherland to a new birth, strengthening it, and perpetuating it.

Patriotism, then, is an assemblage of feelings,

inheritances and attractions, that reach far beyond us, envelop us, and discover to us, outside of the individual life, outside of the family life, a great common life in which we share.

Our country is in our blood, in the characteristic pace of our nervous life, in our thought, our language, even in the inflections of our speech; it is moulded in our frames and sings on our lips.

And, again, our country is these skies, these mountains, these fields, this vast sea that washes our coasts. All these things are not only without us, they are also within us. We bear about with us, in our physical nature, a sort of reflex of our native land, and, in our hearts, her radiant and ineffaceable image.

And, again, our country is the dead, asleep in their graves — our fathers' fathers; and it is the torch of life, passed from hand to hand across the ages, and now held in our own; it is all our patrimony of suffering, strife, and prayers, of trials and triumphs, of virtues and faults, of strength, and of wounds in need of healing. Our country is

our ancestry, but it is also our posterity, the last frail and lovely head that has come to demand its place beside the hearthstone, the child in his mother's arms, in whom all the past and all the future sleep.

Certainly the country is more than the individual, and more than the family; it is a second great stage in this mysterious life that reaches forward from the personal life to an existence fuller and more complete, and it inspires, justifies, and demands every sacrifice, even to that of individual lives.

**D**OES our country thus comprehended, does the patriotism which is its living echo, and reverberates to the very depths of our hearts, imply the exclusion of all without its limits? Is the fatherland a thing opposed and hostile to whatever is exterior to it? Is it unavoidable, even natural, that one aspect of patriotism should be hatred of foreigners? I deny it absolutely.

Patriotism no more implies hatred of foreign-

ers, than family affection entails hatred of other families; on the contrary, just as I honour the memory of my father in the grey hair of a stranger, and understand every father's heart through the tenderness I bear my children, so do I honour my own country in honouring the country of others. Wherever this respect is wanting, the quality of patriotism should be mistrusted. The exaggerated patriotism which tries to blind itself to everything not of its own country, reserving for other nations only scorn or fanatical hatred, is a false and mistaken sentiment. *Chauvinism* is the caricature of patriotism, its blatant and doubtful counterfeit.

**T**HERE are people who deny this truth; some of them even raise *chauvinism* to the dignity of a principle, which they uphold with philosophic or scientific formulas. They extol to us its happy influence in the "struggle for existence." This struggle once recognized, it is dangerous to run the risk of weakening our

courage by the exercise of too much sympathy. We must steel our hearts, train ourselves to insensibility. The most inflexible, the strongest, the most pitiless — he shall be the conqueror of the future. While fire and sword are in the ascendancy, it is a mistake to think of the enemy as a brother; think of him as of a wild beast.

Our reply to this is that the struggle for existence does not take on the same form in all the degrees of life, and that what is law in the world of plants and animals, may easily not count at all in the world of men. Fierce competition, the exclusion of some by others, "selection" by force, and the destruction of the weak, is the law of the lower world, where plants deprive each other of light, and the beasts survive at each other's expense; but in the life of humanity another law rises into view. Our most precious possessions are those which increase by sharing them with others. The very things that generally impede and embarrass life in the lower world,

namely, nearness and union, favour the development of man and of the new interests which make their appearance with human society. In union there is strength, is a true saying for man: his law is solidarity; and by this law, the wrong a man does to other men reacts upon himself, so that instead of increasing by this method, he decreases. Let a man destroy a man, a family a family, a nation a nation, and the consequences of the deed fall upon the doer of it, *inevitably*. The best proof of the superior worth of humanity is that it cannot be submitted to the brutal régime of the lower orders of life without suffering grave injury; and from this I draw the conclusion that *chauvinism*, which is *brutal*, kills patriotism, which is human. Let us observe for a moment its workings.

That ferocity which you nurse and increase, in order that you may one day let it loose upon another nation to destroy it, interferes in your own public affairs to debase them. In divisions among yourselves, political parties, for instance,



you soon come to regard one another not as opponents simply but as enemies, and the savage treatment you had intended to bestow upon foreigners, on some great occasion, becomes the daily bread of your own compatriots. Then what has become of your country? Sullied and rent in factions by your own doing, she is a victim of the unholy zeal you were reserving for her defence.

**A** GOOD many men, struck by such miscarriages of patriotism, have condemned it altogether, proclaiming themselves citizens of the world. We do not wish to undervalue any good intentions, but is not the idea of loving humanity, except through love for our compatriots, an idle dream, just as it is vain to talk of loving our country unless we first love our family, or those who for us stand in its stead? I fear lest love of humanity remain a very vague thing, if it have not for its renewal and nourishment sentiments arising from a source very near the heart. Even at best, cosmopolitanism brings

us more loss than gain. But we have it specially at heart just now to accuse and cry down a certain vulgar cosmopolitanism which chooses its country after the odious adage, *Ubi bene ibi patria*. To propose to us, as a remedy for our present evils, the state of mind depicted in this lamentable saying, is to believe us ripe for the last stage of dishonour. You, men who live for your own pleasure, who declare with a sneer that a man's country is wherever he finds himself most comfortable, you know not what you say. The meaning of "fatherland" is something you have never grasped. One loves his country as he lives, without choice in the matter or discussion about it, and in her days of misfortune he does not forsake her, but hastens to her aid.

**T**HIS said, let us return to our discussion of patriotism, and, having asked whence it comes, now ask whither it goes. Patriotism aims higher than itself. Everything in the life of man is evolution — a becoming; the

family leads to the fatherland, the fatherland to humanity. Hem in the family, confine it to itself, hinder it from broadening out for the realization of that consummate flower, the nation, and you choke it, make of it — however beautiful it may remain — a school of collective egoism. Submitted to such a system, the family perishes. Just so true is it that if you build walls about a nation, and prevent it from gradually leading its children into the revelation of humanity, you dwarf the nation.

Here our thoughts turn very naturally to the Christian position. Its expansion of heart and breadth of view, its freedom from the narrowness which gives rise to partialities, its affirmation of the general interests of humanity, and its practise of universal brotherhood, have sometimes given the impression that Christianity is not only indifferent but even hostile to the family and to the cult of nationality. On this ground, its enemies have accused it of weakening the sentiments of family and of patriotism. It is true that

certain sects, basing their contention on isolated sayings of Christ or of the Apostles, have repudiated family life, and have condemned the existence of individual nations as contrary to the will of God; but neither these sectarians nor these detractors have comprehended Christianity. It is not right to make a stand upon isolated statements; any position taken must be justified by the spirit of the whole Gospel. What has been Christianity's path and her method of extension? She has always been respectful of historic traditions. Jesus did not attack, by revolutionary methods, either the religions or the political institutions of his time. Even slavery, the institution most plainly at variance with the spirit of Christianity, is not directly assailed. More confident in the slow but sure regenerative force of living convictions than in sudden changes, Jesus gave forth his life and teaching, leaving them to eliminate, by a perfectly natural process, the things which could not subsist together with them. Now the spirit of Christianity, which has been mortal

to so much powerful iniquity, which has broken so many chains and cast down so many barriers, has always been favourable to the family. The virtues by which the family is nourished, and those at the foundation of the kingdom of God, are very closely related. Like the kingdom of God, the family lives by kindness, respect, devotion, unity, mutual aid and forgiveness; and it is from the family that the Gospel borrows its most striking expressions and comparisons, for in the family it finds its faithful and living symbol. Deviations and errors, and centuries of monastic and other artificial life, prove nothing here. That great awakening of the spirit of Christianity which characterized the Reformation, had for its first effect the re-establishment of the sanctity of the family. Christianity is the realization of true humanity; how could she be opposed to the most beautiful and the most indestructible of human institutions? She could find in it only a helpful ally. But the exalted value of the family is its educative mission; yet this mission would fall short

of its accomplishment if the circle of family ties did not broaden into a circle more extended. The family announces the municipality and the State, and prepares their way; and to lay bare the secret affinities between Christianity and true patriotism, it is sufficient to show them both manifesting themselves in active devotion, in the spirit of sacrifice, in happiness at being members of a great body. Those prophets whom Christ said He had come to fulfil, without espousing any of the narrow views of their nation were the most patriotic of Jews. As to Jesus Himself, he who comprehends the tears He shed over Jerusalem, has no doubt that He loved his country with that predilection which permits a man to have but one fatherland, as he has but one mother. Saint Paul could wish that he were anathema for the sake of his kinsmen, who are Israelites. What a German was Luther! what a Frenchman Coligny! The Christian could not help being a patriot, unless he could find a way to be at once a bad father, a bad son, a bad citizen, and a good disciple of Jesus!

But just because he is a Christian, this patriot remembers that he is a man. From her threshold, the fatherland broadens out for him into humanity; beyond her frontiers, are men and things he cares for. He is a member of a body greater than any one nation. The moral realities in which he believes, and whose sum makes up the kingdom of God, can only be attained by mankind's united efforts. A nation that misunderstands this truth is in mutiny against herself, against her aims, against her prosperity, moral and material. We are all bound together, brothers in suffering, in ignorance, in the poverty and the wealth of our nature. Whatever be our language, our colour, our conceptions, and however divergent our material interests, a higher interest makes us one. You may fell a tree without injuring the species, but you cannot strike a man, even the weakest or the humblest, without injuring humanity. Such is the cohesion of mankind, that every action vibrates throughout the whole body. The world is like a great ship, launched on an endless sea,

and bound for a far distant port. It makes good headway only when the whole ship's company comprehends its solidarity. All dispute, all quarrel and strife, are like a mutiny or a conflagration on the high seas. Very foolish, they of the fore-castle, to rejoice when there is fire in the stern!

**B**UT this our contemporaries seem too often to forget. The Christian, however, should remember it well, for it is his life, his ideal, his hope — indeed, his all. Then let him be just, and, since he knows that the nations are made to complete one another, let him strive to bring about good understanding among them; it will not hinder him from being a good citizen and a brave soldier. The defence of the fatherland, like that of the hearth and of the individual life, is not simply a right, but an imperious duty, and they especially who aspire to found the kingdom of God are strictly commissioned to permit no wrong to be done, either against themselves or those in their care, or against their country, with-



out interposing the most energetic defence. The just man must be strong and ever ready, if he would not be the agent of his own defeat, and the accomplice of triumphant wrong. After all, the supreme evil is not war, in spite of all its horrors: it is that shameful peace for which men are willing to sacrifice everything, even dignity and honour. The Christian adopts the poet's vigorous word: "God, the creator of iron, did not will that there be slaves."

**B**UT this once established, and with no reservation, the Christian labours for peace, even though under arms, preparing, in the face of necessary evils, the way for a future better than the past. How does he go about it? He profits by all opportunities for correcting false impressions, allaying passions, diminishing the evils of war, propagating ideas of justice, and spreading abroad the conviction with which he is himself animated, namely, that the higher interests of nations are common, and may be better served by association and understanding than by hostility and distrust,

Injustice comes often — almost always — from incapacity. There is a great deal of incompetence and ignorance at the bottom of the sad state of affairs from which we are sufferers. The nations do not know their own best interests, do not know one another. It is a mistake to suppose that our means of swift intercommunication have brought great improvement in this regard. People go about repeating automatically that distance has been annihilated, and that nothing is now hidden, from one end of the world to the other. It is time to dispel this error. The truth is, that there have been epochs in the past, when, in spite of limited means, there was more intercommunication and better acquaintance among nations than there is now.

**O**UR journeys abroad, and our intercourse with other countries, are in these days almost entirely for reasons of business or pleasure. We often meet foreigners on the ground of material interests, which are the cause of so much division and rivalry among men, but

rarely with those moral interests in view which draw men together and make them allies. There is less acquaintance and less understanding among the intellectual classes of the different nations to-day than there was four or five centuries ago, at the time of that revival of learning in the West which created the modern world. Our literary men and our scientists write in various languages, and translations are slow in coming, few in number, and not always authentic. Many an important work remains unknown outside its own country, and workers in special fields are hampered by their inability to read what has been written by their colleagues of other lands. In spite of the inevitability of every man's being a child of his own time, and the fact that progress keeps about the same pace everywhere, there is too much division in the republic of science and letters.

This republic was once much more of an actuality than it is now. As it had its own language, the Latin, which was both written and spoken by

all cultivated men, no important work remained inaccessible to those whom it concerned. Every writer and every professor was a cosmopolite. The frequent wars, the interminable political complications, and the redistributions of territory, did not prevent university lecturers from frequently transporting their chairs from one country to another; and as to students, incredible as it may seem, they covered more ground by stage-coach or on foot, — even barefoot, — to listen to celebrated professors in foreign lands, than students of to-day do by rail.

The existence of our great national literatures is most assuredly not a thing to regret; nor is the continual appearance of so many new and powerful works in living languages, revealing as they do the souls of new-born peoples, whereas our fathers spoke and wrote, better or worse, and oftener worse than better, a dead tongue which was not the language of the masses; but I assert that there once existed bonds of a wider international brotherhood, which would be even more

fruitful to-day, because of the progress of public sentiment; and I feel authorized to declare that a great advantage was lost to the world when those bonds were broken.

**W**HEN, in some such fashion, we try to infuse a little humanity and justice into the minds of men, we are met by shrugs and smiles. And to speak of our own country alone, we are reminded — alas, with too good reason! — that France has often been the dupe and the victim of her humanitarian ideas. The age of these splendid dreams has passed for her; she is forced to follow, whether she will or no, the hostile current of her time, and to deny herself the exercise of sentiment, and of an unappreciated and ill-requited philanthropy. Then we are initiated, with that indulgence which strong minds owe to weak ones, into the secrets of rational politics, after which the divinity of the day is pointed out to us — Force, and its prophet the Cannon. There remains nothing for us

to say. But, really, such wisdom is not a thing to smile about.

Is the Christian actually to capitulate before these arguments? They may be real; there may be myriads of mouths to proclaim them, and millions of guns to give them sanction; they may materialize in a gigantic equipment, and make the earth tremble under the tread of legions; they may be inscribed in contemporary history in lines of blood and fire, and give promise of more overwhelming support in the future than they have had in the past; yet the disciple of Jesus knows One, an adversary of theirs, who has said: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away." In the name of this Master, the Christian, though but a man whose days are as a shadow, and whose words die like a voice in the wilderness, has the right to treat your whole system as a *monstrous anachronism*. However great the colossus may be, its feet are of clay, and, though the whole world should bow down before it in mute terror, the soul of one just

man that is conscious of its hollowness, becomes its judge.

**A** THING that should make us pause, as we look over the political situation of the time, is the existence, by the side of armed force, of that intangible power called public opinion. No dweller in the camp of Force is willing to be an aggressor without having it on his side. Theoretically, men often make sport of it, deriding the efforts of peace leagues, and loudly proclaim that there are matters of dispute which no court of arbitration on earth could rightly judge; yet, while they say it, they use every possible means of pleading their own cause before that judge, public opinion. What a sign of the times! What, then, is public opinion, if not a rival power of force, and one destructive of it? The force of to-day, in spite of its effrontery, seeks to conciliate public opinion, masquerading under the name of protector of peace and of justice; what will be the force of to-morrow? The struggle between

the two has already begun. The public opinion of to-day is the expression of the soul of the modern world, arising out of the unconscious alliance of the French Revolution and its consequences with Christianity. The soul of the modern world sides with the weak, with the right, with justice. Can this soul be extinguished? There the whole question lies.

**O**NLY God knows the future; it belongs to Him. And will this future — the very near future, perhaps — be busy about making us regret the few good hours that the present vouchsafes us? Who knows? Let us suppose that the worst is to happen. Let us admit the possibility for to-morrow of bloody reprisals, of an infernal outbreak of the pent-up revenge and grudges and unjust hatreds of years. Let us call up in imagination a war such as never yet has been,— more murderous, more devastating, a universal conflagration, a Titanic upheaval. And after that, what?



After such a terrible lesson of things, we should have to live on, bind up the wounds, gather together the fragments, fill up the breaches, make our appeal to all those influences which are the negation of bestial force.

Christians, in our feverish Europe of to-day, where the yawning gulf of military imposts swallows up the toil of weary millions, where the old barbaric ways are strangely intermingled in the marvellous progress of civilization, are we doing our duty? There are disciples of Christ in all the nations, and they are twice brothers, even of their enemies; first as men, then as Christians. To-morrow they will be at each other's throats; and why? I call to witness the Master of you all that you cannot offer a valid answer to the question; for the reasons you have for stretching out hands to one another, pardoning one another, and repairing, as best you may, the evils you have done, are a thousand times more urgent than those you have for exterminating one another. It is not possible that you should remain eternally

blind. Think of the good that might result from some such enterprise as this:— men who are patriots, citizens of countries that hate each other, but determined to be just, treating together as Christians, trying sincerely to esteem each other. They would come to see, in a very short time, how many interests are identical on opposite sides of frontiers. Through such men, the warring elements of the world might be brought into association and mutual respect.

Unless you follow some such course, why call upon the name of Jesus and of the God of the Gospel? Turn from them, and invoke instead the old national divinities, to whom men were wont to offer the blood of their enemies as an agreeable sacrifice.

**A** LONG the ponderous lines of march of hostile armies ready for the shock of battle, among engines of war unknown to the ancients, I distinguish something still more foreign to them. It is a red cross, the common em-

blem of whole corps of doctors, guards, and nurses, with the paraphernalia of their calling. To-morrow, when war has done its work, and even in the thick of the fight, these people will rescue the wounded, bind up their wounds, watch over them, without asking to what country they belong. They will be doing the fine and simple deed that Christ immortalized in the parable of the Good Samaritan. As I look at them, I think: *This thing will kill the other.* Yes, the sentiment which leads you to run to each other's aid, even under a rain of balls, will some day be stronger than all the reasons put together that draw you into this inhuman warfare. The red cross will triumph over the cannon. The future belongs to the nurse, to the little grey sister, to all helpful powers, however humble; for two allies are theirs, with whom the victory must rest — suffering humanity and the merciful God.

## VI

### THE CHURCHES — THE CHURCH — RELIGIOUS JUSTICE

I believe in The holy Catholic Church.

THE APOSTLES' CREED.

**W**HEN man is governed by the lower passions, it is not strange that he should be wanting in justice; but at the church's door, might we not expect these passions to be stilled? Can he who worships, also hate? can hands which join in prayer serve iniquity? We should say that this is impossible; and yet it is not. One of the worst forms of injustice has its rise in the religious world; the pages of every nation's history are soiled with it; for men have at times so corrupted

the pure source of Christian charity and brotherly love, that it has run poison. Here again we have need of learning to be just — here, indeed, more than anywhere else.

Let us turn our minds to what is commonly called tolerance. The word is very improperly applied to a kind of neutrality, which is, in fact, only indifference. That the mind which religion leaves cold should judge religious matters calmly, is not at all surprising; a man cannot have feeling where he is not moved. In any matter, indifference is the result of incompetence, so that we should see in it a witness to poverty, not a virtue to be commended. The qualification for just judgment in matters of faith is not lack of faith, so that we ought not to expect sceptics to bring believers into accord by enlightening them with the spectacle of a scornful impartiality. If Justice is pictured blindfold, it is because she judges causes, not men, and not because the prime faculty of an arbitrator is lack of discernment.

But there is another misapprehension to re-

move. The word "tolerance" denotes a state of mind very insufficient here. Tolerance is exercised toward the failings of our neighbours, out of kindness of heart; or it sometimes consists in enduring, quite against our will, what we cannot change. In any case, there is an implication of our superiority to him whom we tolerate. But this is not the sentiment of a religious man toward other religious men; he treats their religion with respect and equity, not looking upon it as an evil, or an infirmity that he must endure dispassionately, but as a good thing and worthy of his reverence. Tolerance is not enough; the case demands justice.

**T**HIS principle stated, we will attempt to show that no one is better equipped than the disciple of Jesus to join to a powerful faith the most complete liberality. Let us begin by probing the evil which we are asking him to remedy.

Whence come intolerance and religious ani-

mosities and disputes? Whence comes fanaticism? They all belong to a false conception of the *essence* and the *object* of religion. What, then, is religion? What end should it serve?

To the first question it is falsely answered:—Religion is a conception of the world, set forth in a collection of dogmas, rites, and ceremonies, which get their authority from divine revelation, and religious institutions are for the purpose of conserving and perpetuating them; truth is one and indivisible, therefore there can be but one true religion. The duty of its faithful followers is to preserve it as it is, and to reject as error everything that departs from it. All religions are at this standpoint — those of India, Persia, and Egypt, ancient Judaism, Mahometanism, and, alas! the churches called Christian. We have so much to consider in our immediate case, that we will leave aside Confucius, Buddha, and Mahomet, and confine ourselves to Christianity.

The history of the Christian Church, from its very earliest days down to the present time,

has shown the effects of the erroneous conceptions we have just mentioned. They have been rare men, in any age, who have not confused the religion of Christ with some body of doctrines. He who is not able to bring his mind into accord with certain formulas, is regarded as an alien and an enemy. The moment Jesus is no longer there to restrain them, the Apostles begin to oppose and exclude one another. Questions of secondary importance, like the observance of the Mosaic laws, become capital, and Christian charity must yield to outworn tradition. In time, it is no longer custom which puts barriers in the way of peace, but system, and the Judaic difficulty is superseded by the Greek. From Christ's life on earth, his work and his teachings, a metaphysical quintessence is abstracted; and a world of subtleties, incarnate in Athanasius, is next triumphant. Woe to him who cannot reconcile the contradictions of its complicated mechanism! he is henceforth excluded from the communion of Him who came to seek and to save that which was



lost. Later on, the Western Church becomes divided upon the question of the freedom of man's will. Pelagius and Saint Augustine divide Christians into two opposing camps, and the story of victors and vanquished in the Church is repeated.

The history of the Christian Church is a long martyrology of heretics, men who, often Christians in heart and in life, have used the sacred right of conscience to arrive at a personal faith. In certain epochs, to question the temporal power of the Pope, to demand the communion in both kinds, to eat meat at forbidden seasons, were, according to the case, sufficient to make a man forfeit his possessions, to imprison him, excommunicate him, or burn him at the stake. The Church, so noble, so admirable, when she is herself persecuted, has too often herself become a persecutor, denying her origin. She has furnished us with odious examples of cruelty; she has coerced and oppressed the heathen in the name of Jesus; the apostles of the Crucified have become

executioners. The vanquished in this long history of strife are always the same — *the Christ and His Gospel*.

THE Reformation comes, and, in the face of the oppression and usurpation of the past, proclaims Christian liberty. But scarcely is the child born, when its parents become alarmed at its rapid growth, and mistrust its future power; so they give to this young liberty the old intolerance for guardian. The first effect is the enfeebling of that prophetic gift which was the precursor of the Reformation and its justification; the second is the splitting up of the Reformation itself into rival factions. Out of liberty subjected to intolerance, rises the sectarian spirit, which is characterized by the exclusion of others when it is the more powerful, and by withdrawal from among them when it is the weaker.

At last, among the mutilated fragments of the Reformation, and under fire of their common adversary, Catholicism, a civil warfare breaks out.

Lutherans and Calvinists fight one another furiously, even going the length of exile and execution! The arrest of the reformatory movement is attributed to the persecution of which it was the victim. A mistake! All the martyrs of the faith have their resurrection; there are smiling harvests for all fields sown in blood. Persecution from without is the furnace in which faith is tried and purified. But our fathers of the Reformation *persecuted one another, and this was their nemesis*. In transmitting to us their virtues and their faults, their spiritual greatness and their spiritual narrowness, they bequeathed us a religious life blighted in the beginning; and we, more apt to imitate their perverseness than their good qualities, have compromised, and shrunk, and invalidated their work. When these later ages demand the new birth of the soul of society, and the rekindling of the sacred fires, the task is found to be beyond the stature of the workmen. We have been victims of the error which confuses religion with a system; for it is the intolerance

arising from this confusion which keeps alive the religions of authority, and kills those whose basis is liberty.

**T**HERE is another source of intolerance — the false conception of the purpose of religion. Religion has a *raison d'être*, it has a use. It is not simply an idea, it is practical; it performs a work in the world, which is its glory or its condemnation.

*According to its founder, the mission of the Christian Church is to seek and to save that which was lost. Its work is healing and restoration.*

**T**HE supreme temptation of a man comes from his individual egoism; the supreme temptation of an institution comes from its collective egoism. When the individual forgets that he lives neither for himself nor through himself, but through and for his neighbour, he becomes an obstacle in the way of the good. Everything that he ought to aid he com-

promises instead. His egoism overshadows all interests but personal ones, and he becomes a source of disturbance and harm.

In so far as an institution surpasses an individual in the number of interests it is charged to protect, just so much greater is the evil it can do than that within the capacity of an individual. When a religion, instead of incessantly recalling its purpose, is inspired chiefly with the sentiment of self-preservation, it forgets that it is the servant of men, and looks upon men as its servants. Thereafter the needs, the aspirations, and the sufferings of its followers become matters of indifference; it is the religion itself, with its dogmas and its conceptions of the world, whose life is of importance, and if a good many men go under in its struggle for existence, that is not unreasonable: let souls perish, if only the church endure! There is no more hateful spectacle than this in the whole combat of life. An institution whose office is to heal, comfort, and sustain men, perpetuates itself by wounding them, oppressing them, and putting them to

death, using in self-defence any means that offers, as do the beasts, that are moved by nothing but the instinct of self-preservation! The champions of such a church, from the simple fact of their being inspired by its spirit, have not hesitated to lie, slander, commit the utmost indelicacies and the greatest crimes, meanwhile defending their actions by the plea of a superior necessity. And so a church, that should be a school of morality, charity, and equity, becomes a school of corruption, of hatred, of injustice.

“Ye shall know them by their fruits,” Jesus said. We might say to the churches: “Tell me what men you make, and I will tell you what you are.” And as intolerance, which proceeds from this double error as to the essence and the purpose of religion, brings about results that might make even faith itself odious, flee it as you would the pest!

**B**UT here an extraordinary difficulty arises. The further we penetrate the conditions of existence of the divers religions, the more convinced we become that,—one only excepted,—intolerance is the safeguard of them all. They all seem condemned to intolerance by an inexorable law, yet at the same time hindered from realizing the purposes of religion by its very fulfilment. They could not, indeed, display a spirit of tolerant breadth without compassing their own destruction. Let Judaism abandon a jot of the law, and it is no longer Judaism; let the Mahometan admit simply the possibility of an infidel pleasing Allah, and there is no more Mahometanism; had ancient Rome erected a temple to the united gods of all the nations within its vast empire, its religion would have fallen in ruins.

It is the same with the Christian churches, in proportion as their cause has become particular, and not the cause of God and of humanity. If a pillar should be wrested from its base in the colossal and erudite structure of Roman Catholicism,

the whole edifice would crumble. If Calvin be found at fault as to the plenary inspiration and absolute authority of the Bible, what becomes of Calvinism? And what of the Lutheran Church without its peculiar doctrine of the sacraments? And what of the numberless other sects, without the particular shade of doctrine which separates them from the rest? *Sint ut sunt aut non sint!* This is the terrible dilemma of their existence; and to preserve this existence they must be intolerant.

**B**UT is it important that this existence be preserved? Is it in the interests of humanity, is it the will of God? Was it for this that God lighted the suns in space, and conscience in the soul of man? Was it for this that prophets were permitted to see the Holy of Holies? Was it for this that Jesus died upon the cross? No! all these things were done because man suffers and God is merciful. That they may relieve the suffering and proclaim God's pity, the churches should be willing to undergo everything, even transformation,



and, if need be, sacrifice of individuality. My brother, a man must die in order to live; this is the law of a man. And to be sacrificed, swallowed up, in order to be saved and to serve her purpose, in order to be born anew and to return from decrepitude to the strength and beauty of her youth,—this is the law of a church. To forget herself is her duty, and, if she rightfully comprehends it, her joy and her salvation. To reach this point of self-abnegation, the Christian churches have but to contemplate Christ. From the moment when they identify their destiny with his, He will communicate to them the secret of catholicity and of justice, with the secret of immortality. It is only the position taken by Christ which can be maintained with real tolerance and justice.

**W**E have come to the threshold of His Kingdom of peace; let us seek to enter it by the road of the heart.

To do this, the Gospel tells us, but one thing is needful, namely, to realize these two facts:— that

man, with all his wretchedness and sin, is yet ever loved of God; and that, first loved of God, man will ever love God and his fellow-men. The Gospel comes from the stars, on the wings of faith and hope, into the midst of human wretchedness, bringing charity, and making a thousand efforts to revive the expiring confidence of men. Oh that it might be heard, be understood, reach men's hearts! As in the depth of night, through the paths of a forest, a voice calls a lost child, so the Gospel calls man. The countless voices of life drown its appeal, but it is ever being made, sometimes with the caressing tenderness of mothers soothing their little ones, or, when the time requires it, bursting forth in splendid denunciations. It speaks the language of memory, of regret, of lost effort; it is remorse, it is repentance; it chastises, it uplifts. Sometimes it seems to come from the immensities of space, to be the salvation awaited by all things that have breath, the answer to our cries, to that perpetual why? wherefore? which broods over us and our lives; sometimes it seems to rise out of the

depths of our own being, mysterious and yet familiar, like some old forgotten song of his childhood, suddenly awakened in the heart of an old man. Human in every fibre, and in that very fact divine, the Gospel has never, from the beginning, identified itself with any particular form. There is within it a prodigious richness of variation upon one theme. To succeed in saying the same thing to so many people, diverse in needs, in origin, in education, in race, the Gospel speaks all tongues, becomes all things to all men. How surely does Paul, under its influence, — Paul, so thoroughly a Jew in heart and thought, — become a Gentile with the Gentiles! In this new environment, he forgets the synagogue and the forms and ceremonials through which it was accessible to the Gospel message. He goes deeper, to a common ground of humanity, calls to his aid a truth which God has made known to all nations. He goes outside the Bible, to base his contention on the poets of the people listening to him, and in an inscription, discovered seemingly by chance on a neglected altar, finds the hid-

den path to the breaches of the citadel. Like a general who reconnoitres with a sure eye, and then hurls his troops into action, he penetrates to the heart of the ancient world by the way of the Unknown God. And always and everywhere, where it has found fervent men to bear its tidings, the Gospel has produced this same effect. By pouring out the Holy Spirit upon them, it makes a thousand souls to be as one. We find it wearing all guises, embracing all systems, adapting itself to every degree of civilization. It is profound, learned, fluent, brilliant; but it is also artless, simple, humble. It travels all highways, and knocks at all doors. It makes the strong compliant and tender, and gives strength to the weak. It is vain for narrow-mindedness to ally itself with the power of the great and the ignorance of the crowd, in an effort to reduce this splendid harmony to a monotonous chant; vain to try to imprison the spirit within the letter; vain to manipulate and to mutilate. Faith was born a heretic, hope follows no beaten paths, and charity laughs at barriers.

**W**HEN we have such a history under our eyes as that of the Christian Church, and read it simply, with the understanding of an upright heart, we learn from all its chapters the same lesson — *Justice*. Hardness of heart and all uncharitableness preach Justice through their misdeeds; self-sacrifice, whose fate it is to suffer through its love, preaches Justice in the name of its martyrdom, and of the achievements it leaves as a heritage to those of us who know how to comprehend. Learn, O my brother, that you are not fighting for God or for Christ and His doctrines, when you seek to hinder their preaching under other forms than your own: on the contrary, you are “hindering the Gospel.”

**I**T does not follow that form has no significance and so should be disregarded; it is better to sound one tone than to be mute, and the narrowest and most imperfect form is better than no form at all. Never will an idea make its way in this world save clothed in some expression; therefore it

behooves us to give the most scrupulous attention and the most enlightened solicitude to religious forms. It is through them that the religious past becomes intelligible to us, and has been preserved for us, and it is through the interpretation of their symbolism, which expresses the religious truth of their time, that the inspired believer succeeds in making their secret penetrate the spirit of others. Religion must needs speak or perish, and its language is in every prayer, every prostration, every image, every tradition; in creeds and customs; in miracles, canticles, and cathedrals; in actions revealing the heart.

We must admit that the Gospel's preference is for speaking by deeds; that its chosen way is to grave its will and its intense love upon the tables of the heart of regenerate man. The epitome of the Gospel is a Man, and afterwards men; its arguments are either benefits or blows driven straight home to the breast. The temple it would build is a purified humanity; yet it neither despises nor condemns any form which can aid us to comprehend

or to spread abroad its spirit; so that to be just we must respect every visible sign by which man seeks to express his grief, his love, or the wonderful pity of God. These signs have often been misused, in the struggle for power, as has the significance behind them; and intolerance, by perpetuating them too long, has rendered harmful forms which were good in the beginning. But the course to follow here is in no way doubtful; while opposing hypocrites and exploiters of religious sentiment, with all our power, we should encourage the weak, the simple-minded, all those who suffer and would be healed, having indulgence for the infirmities of their faith, and the awkwardness of its expression.

Learn to respect the human soul, that God respects, for which all the just have suffered, for which Jesus died; and never mock at it, even though it clothe its faith, or its trembling hope, in superstition. Can you enlighten it, uplift it, free it from some bond? Do so with tact and prudence; if you cannot, be careful lest you take away from some unfortunate his supreme treas-

ure. Do not disquiet yourself about the poverty of his language. He who listens to him will comprehend. It is quite possible that you, enlightened as you are, and deeply versed in holy things, are not so worthy in the Father's sight as the humble believer whose worship appears to you so crude.

**I**T should be needless to add that this respect due to every sincere believer, however unenlightened his belief, should with greater reason be given to him who worships in spirit, who seeks the eternal source of truth behind its outward forms and expressions, always inadequate and transitory. Why should not the liberal-minded believer, who knows that both Moriah and Gerizim are but the shadows of the real sanctuary, receive that tolerance which he gives? Unfortunately, in the common judgment he should not; so that those who are most just may look to receive the least justice. Let the cross of Golgotha testify to this, and let not the disciple think to be above his Master. Though persecuted he will still be



just, and, when the occasion comes, will find in his heart the cry of the dying Huss: — “O holy simplicity!”

**N**UMEROUS objections are raised against what we have just been setting forth, and a well-known figure of wrath rises to combat our comprehension of the subject, the figure of polemics. In the eyes of this handmaiden of theology, what we have called justice is an abomination, and the result of our method would be the ruin of faith, would be religious anarchy, the most dreadful confusion of doctrines ever known. In spite of all the kind promptings of our hearts, fidelity, she says, demands an energetic repudiation of everything that appears contrary to the tenets of our Church, to good order, and to unity.

In the best of faith, polemics believes herself the chief defence of sacred things, the fortress impregnable to all adversaries, and sometimes, in days of great battle, even the champion of God. We

do not share in this opinion. Polemics may have contributed to the clearing up of certain problems, — which, however, would have found their solution elsewhere, — but very much oftener it has confused and envenomed questions at issue by substituting for the desire of finding the truth, the pretension of being in the right — that most calamitous position, so frequently taken in the religious world. In practice, polemics has engendered a great deal of bitter zeal, and excited much unholy passion. It has transformed the Bible into an arsenal, and the words of life into swords of combat, designed to cleave adversaries in twain. It has taken moderation away from the most moderate, and from the kindly disposed the desire to live in peace. There is doubt whether it has edified anybody, certainty that it has disturbed a great many. It has broken the phalanx of religious brotherhood, in which, despite all their differences of opinion, all believers in the earth should stand. And it has done worse still: it has confined the interests of its champions and their various parties almost exclusively to in-

tellectual and doctrinal matters, turning them aside from practical activities and fruitful labour. Altogether, it has merited little from God, whom it could not serve, or from man, who has need of altogether different things. There would be no disadvantage in turning all these swords into ploughshares; the cause of Christ could but gain thereby.

**I**N support of my position, let us consider a particular case. Unquestionably one of the most important matters connected with a religion, and one of the matters most neglected by those most concerned, is the spectacle its followers offer to people without. However full of zeal and activity believers may be, and however deep-rooted in their belief, if they neglect certain fundamental duties, if their differences among themselves lead to bitterness and wranglings, their faith, be it ever so eloquently presented, will make little appeal to the unbelieving. These judge by works; and if you have not good understanding in

your midst, if they perceive a dearth of brotherly love among you, to their mind you are weighed and found wanting. History is full of sarcasms thrown out by infidels and materialists against believers without Christian love; and wherever a believer rejects another believer, offends him, attacks him, wounds him, this unhappy saying is fulfilled: — *The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.* It is vain to talk, to preach, to write, to attack an age refractory to faith; you will not move it so; the vanity of your propaganda is easily seen. The great argument for the conversion of others is not to have beliefs superior to theirs, or to talk better than they; but it is to act better and to be better. When they see that you have attained to this, the adversaries of the faith themselves concede that there must be some reality in it.

My brother, do you and I in this way preach and reveal religious truth? Do we often, by deeds conformed to God's law, and a life that has power

with men because it is filled with God, so react on our neighbour as to oblige him to think higher thoughts? No. If we differ from the crowd in belief, in life we are very much like everybody else. The explanation of our actions is ordinarily not far to seek, nor to be found at a very exalted height. It hardly seems worth while, after all, to believe so many things to so little purpose. The negation of our lives makes others believe in the negation of our faith. Nor is this all. Not only do we not reveal God in our lives, not only do we not prove the Gospel by practising it, but by our works we destroy our own faith. Every bad action shakes the structure of our convictions. Do we not begin to see something of the disastrous consequences of religious injustice and intolerance, — disastrous to ourselves, to our brothers, and to the world that looks on? For this injustice is no longer simply an act, an isolated fault, but a whole perverted system, a whole life, a whole tradition, honeycombed with iniquity. It is no exaggeration to say that the best weapons against religion are furnished by the

life, the faults, and the wrong-doing of its defenders, and that the most formidable of them all is the injury which, in his blind injustice, the believer does to the faith of other believers.

**A**T the beginning of the last century, in different parts of Europe, and particularly in Alsace, the relations between Protestant pastors and Catholic priests were not simply courteous, but even fraternal. Unquestionably, as they well knew, these groups of men stood for two different dogmas, irreconcilable in many points,—the antipodes of the spiritual world; yet did either side become faithless to its principles in offering the hand of fellowship to the other? No, but they thought of something besides creeds. They remembered that simple saying of the people, well calculated to make religious leaders reflect: *We are all men, children of the same God.* From this fact they felt their brotherhood, and became persuasive examples to their flocks. They chose better than those whose veneration for

dogma holds their humane and brotherly aspirations in check. The latter preach Rome or Protestantism, in learned discourses or eloquent books, while in reality they are teaching men to separate themselves from their brothers, and to hate them; the former, in spite of any shortcomings with which they might have been reproached, opened the door to fraternity. Now there are Christians, and Christ was of their number, who attach the greatest importance to this little word, and are disposed to pardon much to those who are its disciples. If you will leave us a little fraternity, we can triumph over many an error; but take it away from us, and what end do all your beautiful teachings serve?

Just here — not without a sinking of heart at thought of the narrow divisions among Protestants — I offer a spiritual tribute of gratitude above the resting-place of that good and truly Christian priest of Gilhoc, who at his death asked that he might be borne to his grave by heads of families from the different denominations. What had his

life been ? Of that I am quite ignorant. And what opinions did he hold ? I know nothing at all about it. But how well I comprehend his action ! — Alas, it is a sign of the times that a circumstance so simple, from the point of view of the Christianity of Jesus, should be so extraordinary as to go the rounds of Europe, and that, after having perhaps admired it, so few of the living should be found to imitate the good priest's action, by saying frankly from the pulpit what he yet proclaims from the silence of his grave.

**W**HEN not the separatist spirit, but the force of circumstances, had driven our fathers of the Reformation out of the Church whose devoted sons they were, there remained at the bottom of their hearts a painful regret. In spite of their splendid faith, their joy at living in the new world they had found, and, on the other hand, the excommunication that had been launched against them, they found it hard to be consoled for having rent the



Church asunder. Then, little by little, out of the very heart of their grief, rose, in the clearer radiance of truth, the image of the Church Invisible. How many times since has not this image consoled their children, in the midst of the strife of sects! The Church Invisible! It has been, it is, it will be. None are in possession of it, no one names it, no one opens and shuts its doors. God is the only head of it, and all the dead and all the living on whom the Spirit ever descended, are its members. What man shall bind or loose, what man shall receive or exclude, is of no moment there. But one judge is known in it, He who has said, Judge not; but one law, charity; but one enemy, evil. It is the Holy Church Universal, for it is the only one in which is to be found no hatred, no selfishness, no narrowness. It is as wide as the heavens, and as merciful as God. What the churches have divided, the Church unites; and in the certitude that, though invisible, she is more real than the rent and riven Church of the present, the soul that feels Christian charity finds peace. In the vision of The Church

we see Justice! Let us try to lift our eyes to this serene height.

We must first get out of the narrowness of particular groups: they are good only for leading us out, little by little, into something wider. Our aim must be beyond them; there are brothers to discover, there is good to be found everywhere, we may be right sure. To be jealous of the good done outside our own borders, is very unworthy of us; good is done against no man, but is profitable for all. When we find a man of action and enthusiasm who does not think as we do, and whose religious ideas astonish and offend us, we need not imagine him Satan disguised as an angel of light; we should recall the saying of Jesus: "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold."

Let us aspire to the happiest revelation it is given man to have, — the revelation of *The Holy Church Universal*. Let us listen to the marvellous harmony of love, hymn of so many and such different voices, that comes from every quarter of the world. How

mighty must He be, how good and kind, He who draws them from Orient and Occident, from all the heights and valleys of human life, and unites them in Himself! Without Him, impenetrable barriers would separate them, but with Him there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither bond nor free, but a new creature! The triumph of the Christian, his great joy, his splendid privilege, is, through Christ, to come into touch with his brothers most unlike one another, and farthest removed from himself. There is a single saying of Christ's that makes a ground upon which all his disciples may stand together; what, then, of the whole Gospel! The truth is, that we no longer know the Gospel teachings to live by them, and herein is our condemnation. — But to return to the saying. Christ said, and He first put the words into practice: *Love your enemies*. What is this commandment? A lofty demand to bring about splendid effort? A means of severe discipline, to assure the victory over self and the passions? It is all this, but it is also much more. It is the affirmation of the brother-

hood of man, under a form as forceful as it is unexpected. We are to love our enemies; that is to say that for another to be outside our sympathies, or for us to be beyond his, is not enough to break the indestructible bond of human fraternity. Behind the enemy, remember the man! The hostility is an accident; what is substantial is the humanity. We are enemies by chance and from minor causes, such as temperament, race, subordinate interests; but we are brothers by the very marrow of our bones, and the undoubted signs of our divine parentage. Therefore even mortal enemies, whose aim and salvation seems to be the destruction of one another, are bound together in indissoluble brotherhood. You cannot tear man away from man; that would be injury to God. Such was the teaching of Christ, and we ought to accept it. And the disciples of such truths as these begin by attacking one another, because of their rivalries or their differences of doctrine! Could anything be stranger than to attempt to conquer the world for the Gospel by betraying the Gospel itself? By the

law of love we are judged and condemned — we and the churches; for the deceits of the “old man” work so powerfully within us that the feeble endeavours of the “new man” are stifled.

**I**S it not a small sacrifice to abandon our “chapels,” our narrowed creeds, in order that men may once again behold on earth the grandeur, now all unknown to them, of the real Gospel? To the prisoners and captives of man’s bigotry, the voice of Jesus sounds the call of all high vocations: *Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee!* And, following the voice of the call, we shall find the way to countries and kindred we know not of, and shall look out upon horizon after horizon, until that day when we shall comprehend the infinite breadth of the confession: *I believe in The holy Catholic Church.*

## VII

### SOCIETY AND THE INDIVIDUAL SOCIAL JUSTICE

We, who are many, are one body.

ROM. xii. 5.

**A** COMBINATION of circumstances, economic, moral, and political, has for a number of years given great prominence to a series of problems called collectively the social question. Having for its elements conditions many of which have existed since the beginning of civilization, this question has frequently presented itself in the course of history; but in some epochs, thanks to certain measures taken, sometimes of wisdom, sometimes of violence, — and thanks also sometimes to

unforeseen changes in the life of nations—the necessity of finding a solution has been less peremptorily felt, and the question has been relegated to the future. It has none the less never ceased to exist, and has only awaited the occasion to arise with increasing insistence. Such an occasion is furnished it to-day.

It appears with a number of new factors, all pertaining to the modern world, among them so-called *industrialism*, *plutocracy*, *militarism*, *materialism*, and *the rights of the individual*. In proportion as man's labour has become involved with that impersonal power *capital*, laws and institutions have become more humane. On the one hand, the progress of the natural and mechanical sciences, and the prodigious increase of capital, have reduced the importance of the individual; on the other hand, the progress of the laws and the diffusion of knowledge have increased it. The result is a sort of suspense.

In olden times the slave was not looked upon as a human being; the watchword of the serf of the

Middle Ages was, *Suffer and be silent*. He had no more right to appeal to his lord, and ask redress for his wrongs, than the clay has to question him that fashioned it. When he sank under his tasks, it attracted no attention: this had been going on from time immemorial. At intervals, his suffering and torture and long-smouldering hate made their way upward in a burst of savage revolt, and there were orgies of vengeance; but they were soon quieted by methods too terrible to think of, and the world went on with no change on the face of it. Chains were forged stronger, more precaution was taken; that was all.

**T**O-DAY all men are equal. The humblest of them not only is protected by the laws, but he takes at least an indirect part in their framing. As citizen and voter, he holds a power equal to that of the most influential and enlightened of his compatriots; the law of majorities even gives him the advantage, and he can make his will felt in the councils of state. At the



same time, it often happens that this man, invested though he be with attributes of royalty, is without work, without bread for himself and his children, without shelter, without provision for the future. His condition belies his dignity. The more fully he becomes conscious of his rights, the more he feels himself injured. Education, in refining him, has increased his capacity for suffering, and he finds offensive things which would have been the delight of the plebs of old Rome. Hardened by suffering, and imbibing from the science of the day materialism rather than anything else, he is reckless and comfortless. Progress puts into his hands such powerful weapons of destruction that, with resolution and skill, ten men can destroy a town, and a few thousand deliver over a whole land to revolution and terror. The fact of so many weapons in the hands of want — which is often a bad counsellor — is disquieting, and, in spite of the generally regular proceedings which have characterized these sufferers in the past, the social question is more or less like the dilemma of a man who finds himself

at night in some byway, facing smiling lips and the barrel of a revolver. The formality of the thing may be correct; its significance is imperious and threatening.

**T**HIS question meets with various responses, in different quarters. Certain men, satisfied with their own condition, are astonished that there should be unrest anywhere. Are they not fed and housed — they and their children? That anybody should complain of cold and hunger, after that, appears strange. Some vice must be answerable for it, or some mismanagement, if the whole thing is not imposture; unless, indeed, it be simply a manifestation of ill-will, to disturb the peace and happiness of others! These optimists compare the past with the present, and find that there has been considerable progress, that general well-being has greatly increased, and that, instead of accusation, we ought to hear praise. But the world, in becoming more fortunate, has become more exacting, and has grown stupid and

ungrateful. In the past there were famines, plagues, and public disasters, in comparison with which our own miseries are insignificant. Hard times may well come later on, when people will regret the state of things at which they now chafe and fret. There is some truth in all this, but the argument loses its value, for the reason that it is inspired by selfishness. It ignores one whole side of the question; indeed, it might well be summed up in these words: *I don't suffer ; what are you complaining about ?*

**T**HE sceptics smile. Here, as elsewhere, he is a fool who tries to change anything. So long as men remain men, they will work for their own interests. If others must suffer, that is their own misfortune; it cannot be helped. To swim against the stream, to try to change instincts and propensities, or to ameliorate the conditions of social life—what vain undertakings! Whatever is, is right. Leave things as they are. And these sceptics are to be found even among the most

destitute, whose despairing smile has the bitterness of death.

**T**HERE are Christians, too, men of little faith, who show, to our idea, a misplaced resignation. The present age is dedicated to sin, and the just retribution that follows it. The earth is a place of trial; God has so willed it. To attempt to better conditions, to prevent suffering, to resist the evils which overwhelm us, is a contumacious undertaking. Provision seems to have been made that this place of exile shall not be metamorphosed into a garden of delights. To take another view, if we should remove all misery, would it not be cutting the ground from under the feet of charity? Has not Christ said: "Ye have the poor with you always?" We should resign ourselves, remembering that they who mourn shall be comforted.

Without dwelling on the error at the base of this reasoning, we would point out how suspicious it must always be in the mouth of those who are not themselves unfortunate. Except for its religious

tinge, this is the language of the purest selfishness, in search of a pretext for its being. No Christian has the right to abandon himself to such sophistry; offered by the sufferers themselves, it is certainly touching, yet to be condemned for its want of confidence.

**T**O some people, the social question is a mine to be worked. What more ingenious than to make one's bread out of the hunger of others, or to find one's own security through their fears? To make promises to the poor, who are always ready to hope, or to the criminal, who want enjoyment without work; to make capital out of the righteous aspirations of the one group, and the unrighteous aspirations of the other; to undermine by words the existing order of things, and to construct, in words also, a new society, where all is happiness and perfection — this is so easy, and has been accomplished so often, that the unscrupulous are ever ready to attempt it; unless they find it simpler and more profitable to

follow the opposite course, and pose as alarmists. The man of few possessions is apt to be credulous, and there is great temptation to abuse his confidence. Many succumb to it, and thus the social question gets its characteristic parasites, whose equivocal operations compromise every situation.

**A**S to men of violence, whose fashion of undoing knots is to cut them, we find them equally among the defenders of the actual state of things and its detractors. The former count on a demonstration of armed strength, provisionally, to maintain order and safeguard property, or, if need be, to check any troublesome initiative on the other side. They have no confidence in anything but force. Do they not perceive that the interests of those who hold the weapons and those against whom they are turned, are bound up in each other? Can nothing remove their blindness? Will they never learn that they are fighting among themselves, and that for those whom they make suffer to take counter measures, is neither an outrage nor a crime?

There are, as well, men of violence among those who have just reason to complain of the state of society and its institutions, who have no more faith in persuasion than the others. They believe neither in the might of right, nor in a slow and progressive development. Tear down everything and begin anew — this is their principle. Has it ever occurred to them, that, in order to create the new society which should follow in the train of their victory, they must appeal to all those influences in which they do not believe — patience, good-will, mutual confidence? Force is the foremost of anti-social powers, and the attempt to apply it to social questions is like Plato's *chopping wood with a key, and opening the door with an axe*.

THE present hour is one of much obscurity and confusion, in the midst of which every man must feel his way. There is a restlessness abroad, much easier to sense than to suggest measures for allaying; and the result is a sort of ebb and flow, with ill-will, distrust, personal

ambition, and unchristian passions threatening to gain the upper hand. Little by little those at the two extremes of the question are drawing apart, while they would find it of the utmost mutual benefit to approach. To come to an understanding amid all this dust of upheaval, is going to demand, above all other things, cool heads and warm hearts.

**H**ERE begins the part of the Christian, of the man whose first desire is for justice, and whose sense of the realities has not been destroyed by passion or personal interest. Let us attempt to outline it, but first let us rid ourselves of a certain misunderstanding.

There has been talk of Christian socialism, of an entire system, deducible from the Gospels, for reforming society in detail; but nothing of the sort exists, or ever has existed, save in the minds of certain sectarians. There is no such thing as Christian politics or Christian economics. Certain experts might even point out very apparent errors in these matters in the New Testament, and offer



the aid of their advancement and their own systems. On the other hand, what we do have in the Gospel is better than all this. A system has only a special application, and, out of its proper place, it does more harm than good; but Christianity offers us something universal and permanent,—*a state of mind, a direction of activity*, out of which shall come, at each stage of social development, the maximum of justice then possible. The principles of Christianity are of prime importance to society and its organization; they are the leaven that leaveneth the whole lump.

**I**T is a continual source of astonishment to the student of the history of Christianity, to find how little regard has been paid to the social conclusions to be drawn from it.

Christianity is the religion of the *Father* and of *brotherhood*. This fact can never be gainsaid, and the whole Gospel is contained in these two terms. In the beginning, there was no question about it. On the lips of Jesus, and of those about Him who

were touched with the fire of His spirit, the words Father, Brother, are like a cry of mingled joy and grief,— like a cry of the soul in a moment of unexpected meeting, when those who were lost are found again. My father! my son! my brother!— these are not simply words, they make a drama — yes, they create a world.

Unfortunately, early in the history of Christianity, after certain abortive attempts at something better, we find the old social injustices coming back again; the new bond of spiritual fraternity was not strong enough to overcome the evil inspirations of selfishness. As in their worship and their doctrine, where the old paganism and the young Christianity were patched the one upon the other, the life of Christians presented a singular mixture of theoretic justice and practical barbarity. They took nothing away from the Gospel, but how they pushed its dogmatic teachings to their extreme conclusions, even to absurdity, and how easily they glided over its moral and social admonitions! During certain epochs of religious

frenzy, we find everybody, from exegetes and bishops to simple laymen, — even down to the boatmen disputing to the rhythm of their oars,— working themselves into a passion over questions of metaphysics. None of them seem to have suspected that the questions which mattered were quite of another kind, and that the greatest of heresies, that which is a blasphemy against God, a destroyer of souls, an affront to Christ, is that heresy of life which leads a man to drink social iniquity like water.

These backslidings and misconceptions are not inexplicable. The kingdom of righteousness, the new earth wherein old things are passed away, could not appear suddenly; there are too many obstacles, of every nature, in the world's institutions, laws, manners, and customs, and in the instincts and passions of men. After all, it is not reasonable to be greatly surprised at this partial check to the Gospel, prolonged as it has been; but it would be a singular misjudgment of the force and vitality of the spirit which was in Jesus, to suppose that it could ever yield.

Christianity certainly has within it an incredible power of resignation; but while it submits in the world of sight, it holds staunch in the world of faith. Christianity knows that he who is overcome by the world's burdens will fall into the everlasting arms; that for the cruel sufferings of this life there is a compensation, whose secret the Father keeps. But the Christian, far from relaxing his efforts to combat the present evil, because of this indubitable hope, feels it increase his ardour tenfold. "Thy will be done *on earth*; deliver us from evil," — this is his constant prayer. And he knows that in making it he is in harmony with the divine will, and that nothing can finally resist him.

CHRISTIANITY, then, is not tidings of a kingdom of God to come *after this world*, but of God's kingdom in the world, and it aspires to nothing less than a radical transformation of the individual and of society. The form and method of this change are not prescribed; they are determined by the surrounding conditions,

the degree of culture, and a host of factors which must be taken carefully into account. The manner of it is of secondary importance; the change must simply be one of the heart.

Love, and thereby gain your freedom; love, and let your heart speak as it will, as it can — this is the new law for the individual; and the new birth of the old man through its workings, is Christian conversion. But would it have any reality if it were only an individual matter? Out from the impurity and wickedness of our hearts has come the whole monstrous body of social evils; but the institutions of a society based upon selfishness, strife, and oppression, the old body that enwraps the injury-working spirit of the ancient world, cannot serve for the envelope of the new life. And this is so true that through the still darkened conscience of Christendom, and in spite of the accursed alliance of the Church with the powers of death and injustice, the spirit of Jesus has operated vigorously among men, accomplishing innumerable reforms.

When His disciples deny Him, He inspires the lips of His detractors, fulfilling the words: "If these shall hold their peace, the very stones will cry out."

**C**HRIST, then, you say, is a revolutionist. *Yes, in the fullest sense of the word:* for His undertaking is one of those that admit of no compromise. He never concealed the fact, but always claimed the whole man, with no reservation. The hand once put to the plough, there must be no looking back. The Christian ceases to be such a man, of such a class, in such a situation, and with such interests; hereafter his interest is the general interest; he has renounced his own, not with regret, but with the joy of all those who discover this new world. He is no longer a solitary, shut up within himself, and armed against others; he is a brother. When one can say, in verity and with joy, "I live; yet not I, but Christ, liveth in me" —that is to say, He who gives himself for his brothers liveth in me — he has undergone the most astonishing transformation that it is possible to

imagine; the centre of his whole activity is shifted.

It hardly need be said that this revolutionist called the Christian, scrupulously refrains from the use of all means contrary to the spirit of Christianity, and that, like his Master, he relies upon gentleness, persuasion, the weapons of the spirit, and, most of all, example. *Fortiter in re, suaviter in modo*. And here again he is an innovator, for these are not the methods that revolutionists ordinarily employ.

**I**F I do not entirely misread life, the following out of such methods, in the spirit of practical wisdom which Jesus was the first to draw from the inspirations of his heart, is the thing in the world most rare and most to be desired. In making them his own, and in gaining converts to them in the world, the Christian has it within his power to render this troublous age an inestimable service.

His first advantage over others is that he belongs

to no party, and, above all, that he has none of his own. Out of real and sincere benevolence, he has at heart the welfare of all men, and makes himself familiar with many social atmospheres. Rich, poor, exalted, humble, master, servant, lettered, ignorant, the Christian may be; but he is not limited to any one class. In whichever he may belong, he lives also the life of his neighbour, and makes it so much his own, that, underneath the different outward conditions, humanity touches humanity. Freed from the bonds of class prejudice, which hold almost all men like prisoners in irons, he visits his fellow-men in their captivity; and, seeing the height of the walls that hedge them in, and the strength of their chains, — ancient and formidable fatalities of the social world, — he cries to Heaven that the chains shall fall off, and the walls crumble away. We flee from one another in fear; we ought instead to seek one another out in confidence. Every one of us possesses something that the others lack; to join forces would be the salvation of us all, and to this end the Christian labours.



**A**NOTHER advantage the Christian has; the social question is not to him a question of food and drink. Man, that splendid and complex being, the extent of whose possibilities, the nobility of whose needs, and the sublimity of whose sorrows, cannot be measured or defined, is to his mind something very different from what that would imply. The Christian does not underestimate the cruelty of material needs; he knows that the gnawing of hunger may leave a man little more than a raging beast; but he does not lose sight of the fact that man does not live by bread alone. It is only in the world of animals that material appetites become an exclusive question, and then they have seldom a solution outside of the dilemma, *to devour or to be devoured*. To find them peacefully resolved, we must descend to the lower orders of animal life. The mollusks live at the bottom of the sea, without hunger or thirst, in perfect equality and unbroken felicity. But they lack certain qualities which make us prefer to them a perfectible though imperfect and suffering human-

ity, even though we are ourselves among the most imperfect and most unfortunate of men. The social question must be faced in all its breadth, which compasses the entire man, body, mind, and spirit. Unhappy for us if we limit it to its material side! This limitation it is which separates men, brings them into conflict, and makes life narrow and paltry. He who considers only his material needs is a selfish creature, deaf to the cries of others, an enemy of his kind. Fortunately he is not the only one to be heard.

**A**ND, above all, do not confuse the *man* with the evil from which he suffers, and the defects or vices which are its consequence. No one has himself accumulated all the burdens he bears; it is the weight of the past that holds us down. To remember this, is to become more charitable and less exacting. In our day, the rich and the poor, masters and servants, employers and workmen, are much disposed to make reciprocal accusations, but this is all wrong. The re-

sponsibility for our ills, which we try to shift upon each other, belongs to us in common, and, whoever we are, instead of accusing our neighbour, we should beat the breast and acknowledge our share in it. Then, after accepting our own part of the blame, we may remember how large a share of it belongs to the past. All history is pinioning our arms, while we have wrought but the evil of a day. At bottom we are companions in misfortune and error, rather than doers of premeditated wrong.

**B**Y a natural movement of the heart, the Christian finds himself on the side of the weak and the oppressed. He does, indeed, have some interest in those who wrong them, perceiving, from his high point of view, that it is better to suffer evil than to inflict it; but he sees that it is best of all to resist it vigorously on either side. To protect the weak from oppression, and restrain the strong from crime; to shatter injustice, that two-edged sword which wounds him who wields it as well as him whom it strikes, is a complex aim,

difficult of attainment for any but a man whose conscience is true; indeed, even to undertake it, demands rare qualifications. Man takes arms against the abuses from which he suffers, but champions those through which he profits. He is led by base motives, confuses causes with persons, cannot rise to the height of pure justice, and seldom does battle for one right, without, in this very act, doing violence to another. In the midst of these obscurities and gropings, how good it is to have within the breast the steady light of Christian feeling! In epochs of transition, the privileges already acquired and those to be gained; the rights of property, and the more appealing rights of destitution; old institutions, outworn and condemned, which, for lack of better, must still serve awhile, and new ones not yet firmly established or fulfilling their functions, clash in the midst of human passions. Everything is unstable: we seem to look out, not upon the firm land, but upon the raging sea. What a range of vision is needed to perceive the shoals ahead! Nothing but a torch illumined at the flame

of Jesus, can light the way. His spirit has such power, that before it works the destruction of pernicious institutions, it neutralizes the evil in them. It brings forth good through countless obstacles. Read the Epistle of Saint Paul to Philemon, concerning slavery, the most abominable and most odious institution the world has ever known. For the people to whom the letter introduces us, this institution, which continues to exist outwardly, is abolished in the inner life. All the social power of the Gospel is illustrated here; for it is through the heart of man that it makes itself felt in the world, purifying the source, that it may make wholesome the stream.

**O**UR need to-day is of upright men from all ranks, self-denying disciples of Christ, representatives of all the activities and all the disabilities of the age, who are bent upon understanding and enlightening one another; men who shall act with justice, wisdom, and energy, and who shall speak, not in the name of some per-

son or faction, but of the whole human family, in the name of God and of their brothers.

But, while we await them, it is impossible that any one who has, I will not say the heart of a Christian, but the heart of an honest man, should not suffer. Why dissimulate the truth? Twenty centuries after the dying Christ stretched his hands upon the cross of Calvary, and called the whole human race to share in His life-giving pain, we have still failed to take the necessary steps to mitigate certain crying evils, and to reform the abuses which put to shame our customs and our laws. The inertia of the greater number has hitherto balked the most generous efforts. We bemoan the evil, but not the cause of it, and apply palliatives to it with culpable irresponsibility, when what is needed is the most drastic measures at its root. And these errors pile up and topple over on our own heads and the heads of our children, bringing social disorders and disasters, degeneration of the race, and international convulsions, in their train. All these evils hang together, and have

a common origin in our want of brotherhood. Let us face the situation a moment in all its enormity.

The most unfortunate and least respected among men are often the hardest workers. To furnish bread for others and lack it one's self, to build houses and have no lodging place, to make garments and suffer from the cold — this is monstrous, and yet it is common enough. Worse than this, legions of men and women are brutalized by labour that is wholly material, often unhealthful, rarely interrupted for rest, and withal poorly paid. You say it is inevitable. Then there is a flaw at the very base of the system; it cannot be admitted that a society should be a machine to crush the very columns which uphold it.

The woman of the people, in a bitter and inhuman struggle, neglects the mind, soul, and body of her children to earn them a crust of bread, while the little things themselves, pale and lifeless, bending under labour unfit for their age, add to the demoralization. And so the masses become a centre of disaggregation, physical and moral. Is this life?

It is a life from which in the end societies die. And I do not speak of the downfall of the outward constitution of things, but of destruction by inward contagion. We are bound together indissolubly, and each is responsible for all. Restlessness, corruption, weariness of life, and all the ills that attack those called the fortune-favoured, are but the echo at the top of society of the misery which our vicious social organization produces at the bottom. The dregs of our civilization make a sort of hell like a whirlpool continually sucking in myriads of lives. He who looks upon these horrors has his sight clouded; the sky seems less brilliant to him, there is a shadow on the world; he suffers, because he has love for these, his brothers, and would right their wrongs. Shame upon him who can be happy while death and defilement and ignominy harrow his brothers' souls! From the depths of his wounded heart the disciple of Christ,—like his Master, acquainted with grief,—hears a voice crying out for pity and Justice.



**W**E ask ourselves, Why must the evil be so fearful and so great? for it wears such an appearance of fatality, that it seems an affront in the face of all effort. But the Christian is proof against discouragement; for him the remembrance of Jesus triumphs over all else. He is not befogged by the sombre talk of the sages who do nothing because there is so much to do and they cannot do it all. This theory of everything or nothing is a pernicious sophism, discouraging some from patience and hope, and others from those undertakings for the future, in which the impossible of to-day becomes the possible of to-morrow. The Christian is on guard, too, against the modern tendency to glorify success, and to suppose that whatever meets with checks and hindrance is therefore self-condemned. It has been the fashion of philosophers, after each Revolution in France, to give the Republic so many years in which to establish itself, or finally collapse. How many years would they give the Gospel, so often vanquished, and so far from victory yet?

According to such theories as this, the days of grace for the Sermon on the Mount have lapsed long ago. What discouragement for a suffering age in such ideas! The remnants of exhausted races might whisper them to one another, when the end of the world is about to be accomplished, and decaying civilizations are awaiting their doom; but they are not thoughts for us. Speak to us of the righteous dead, that you may inspire us to follow after them. Lead us to the tombs of the martyrs, and sprinkle our heads with their ashes, that we may go forth into the good fight they fought. In the face of our social questions, so urgent, so comprehensive, embracing, as they do, national affairs, and even the religious question itself; in the face of the tremendousness of evil, the Christian has constantly to repeat to himself — especially when he sees some humane undertaking fail — *Try again!* This is the humble but staunch device of all those who have come to understand something of the onward march of humanity, something of its slow and laborious evolution. Laugh, if you will, at

what you call their errors; the supreme error, for a man, is to renounce hope.

THE more plainly I see the old world passing, in its own life and in the confidence of men, though its outward show and its defences and precautions are so prodigious; the more clearly I perceive the restless activity of mind that is seeking the form of thought, education, and society befitting our time; the more clearly also, in the midst of all this uncertainty, do I hear the voice of Christ. Wherever any good remains or is struggling to a new birth among men, Christ is there. His disciples cannot be evil-minded, selfish, tyrannous, without denying Him; nor can those who know Him not, be just, patient, and brotherly, without repeating His words and living His life. Wherever night is vanishing in the glimpses of dawn, He is there; but a man need only turn aside from His way, to be swallowed up in darkness. *For the watchword of to-morrow, for the salvation of society, we must look to Him.*

We are rich, haughty, and powerful; our age is an age of marvels; we have made conquest of the earth, and have surpassed in our discoveries and achievements the most daring dreams of our forefathers. The face of the whole world is changed. Yet why are we such miserable creatures? It is because of the lack of God in our lives and of love for our brothers.

**T**HERE are old-time legends of dying kings who commanded to be brought to their bedside some alchemist thought to possess an elixir of life, and demanded of him: "Save me! Drive away the spectre of death, and all things shall be yours, — power, glory, and riches!"

Are we not much in the condition of these kings? Over our decrepitude and our infirmities our brilliant civilization is cast like a royal mantle round the shoulders of a moribund. And we, too, look for one who shall make us alive again. O Christ, deliverer of men, Thou whose strength

of love is our healing and our regeneration, if, in order to receive Thee, we must have long erred and suffered; if, in order to hear thy voice, we must be bruised and spent and in despair, now Thou mayest come! Speak to us; the time is ripe to understand Thee!

## VIII

### THE RELIGIOUS CONCEPTION OF WORK

If any will not work, neither let him eat.

II. THES. iii. 10.

For we are God's fellow-workers.

I. COR. iii. 9.

**C**ONVINCED that our current ideas on the subject of work are in need of modification, and that a change in them would have an incalculable influence upon our well-being, both moral and material, I purpose to sum up here certain reflections which this vast subject has suggested to me. All the wrong and injustice in the world has its rise in the human heart, in its perversities and

its false judgments. The value of things depends upon the price we put upon them. To appreciate them equitably, judge them justly, is to prepare the way for the realization of things better still.

Among the social interests of the present time, a great place is given to work. Production and consumption, wages, the distribution of profits, the hours of labour, the work of women and children, — all these things are the subject of countless studies, controversies, and practical measures, so that we might well call the labour question the pivot round which all other social questions turn. But it is not under any of the forms just enumerated that I intend to face the problem; I mean to rise to a higher point of view, where man's toil appears in a new light, and we begin to see dimly its place in that grand total of things to which we belong, with all that we are, all that we possess, and all that we produce.

HOW should religious men, how should Christians, look upon toilers and toil?

Man has two parts to play in life, of which the first is to receive impressions from the surroundings in which he finds himself, and the second, to react upon these surroundings. The one extends to all our powers of representation, sensibility, and emotion, — it consists in perceiving, comprehending, suffering; the other embraces all our motive powers, and consists in willing, acting. In this second part, work holds the central place: it *is* action.

Activity is the essential function of life, so that to suppress it, is to suppress life itself. Every force is incessantly urged to action, and by impeding it or imprisoning it, we produce discomfort, torpor, and corruption. Encourage it, give it free play, and the result is contentment, development; so that nothing is truer than the saying that to act is to live. Given man as we know him, and we might define him as *the personification of work*.



**W**E know that the whole creation labours, in the atoms of inorganic matter, and in the vegetable world, where countless activities and marvellous productions are unveiled before our eyes, from the simple moss of the farthest north to the luxuriant foliage of the tropics. And we know that the world of animals is astir with work; think of the life of the ant-hill, for instance, or of the hive. "Go to the ant, thou sluggard," says the Bible sage to the man of sloth, oblivious of his task. But this activity is not work in the same sense as man's; the reason for it is unknown to these creatures, and neither liberty nor progress is involved in it.

We need not dwell upon this fixity of instinct and habit, which gives to the animal world, when free from the disturbing influence of our life, somewhat of the immutable stability of natural law.

The work of man is a creative work; he is always striving to produce things which are not. He begins awkwardly, like a child, but he grows, he becomes transformed; he must either advance

or retrograde, and in all his labour there is either a promise or a threat. Through his works, which embody his soul, we have glimpses of perspectives sometimes smiling, sometimes frightful; but he always surpasses himself in some projection toward the infinite. The work of beasts is like a remembrance of the past; the work of man is a prophecy. Then our contention is that the chief function, the consummate flower of life, revealing outwardly all that the mysterious and unfathomable being called man bears within him, is work.

**I**N laying down this principle, we are at variance with all the current commonplaces, and almost the totality of received opinion on the subject, even with many scientific men who make labour their specific field of research. He who says *work*, nine times out of ten thinks *trade*. More and more, as the years go by, does work become bread-winning, and closer connection is established between it and the money it brings in, as though the two things coincided with each

other. I do not hesitate to affirm — not for the purpose of giving my thought a paradoxical form, but very seriously, and with entire conviction — that this conception of work, as something to barter, is one of the most wretched, most immoral, most anti-social and anti-religious ideas possible. This is work on its lowest plane.

But let us clearly understand one another. Some people consider the inferior kinds of work to be manual labour, particularly day-labour. We do not so understand the matter. No work is inferior or superior in itself, but all work acquires its value from the spirit in which it is done, is worth what has been put into it. We brand, then, as inferior labour, the work of every man, whoever he may be, who works from low motives and with ordinary aims; and at the foot of the ladder we would place what is called forced labour, — the labour to which certain criminals are condemned by society. Alas, not all the galley slaves were ever in the galleys! — by which remark I do not mean to allude to certain kinds

of labour so painful that they may justly be compared with that of slaves; we shall speak of such occupations later on, and in a very different spirit. But I call penal labourers all men who work simply because they are hungry and thirsty, and a man must eat and drink. How many such toilers are there? They are legion! But they are not alone those toilers with the hands who hate work, and keep at their task only because they are goaded to it by their needs; in this class belong also all workers, of whatever social rank, who toil only that they may dress better, lodge more sumptuously, eat, drink, and be merry, — in a word, to provide for their own material well-being and pleasures.

**T**HE writer or artist who broods and executes with the single purpose of selling his wares to the highest bidder, is truly a slave. The more ingenuity and delicacy he puts into his wretched fabrication, the more he cheapens and dishonours his race. A slave, too, is the

doctor whose science is venal and whose one aim is money; and the professor who teaches the young merely because he has to, to gain a livelihood. Heavens! what a host they are, the servile crowd that daily go about their sad affairs, in education, literature, art, politics, and, oh shame of shames, religion itself!

Let us go a little further, and brand with the name of worker of the inferior sort whoever is inspired with only personal ambition. He who passes his days in fashioning the stones of his own pedestal, may be a very capable and gifted man, but at bottom he is a pitiful creature, and his work is so much the less to be valued as he has made higher things serve to glorify a paltry ambition.

When I think of all these toilers without ideals, prodded on by their needs or stung to action by cupidity, I am reminded of those armies of mercenaries, base fighters, who used to sell their blood to the highest bidder, going into battle under the lash or the blows of rifle-butts, always

ready to flee from the field of their dishonour, and having no motive to keep them facing the enemy, save the consciousness of gun-barrels levelled at their backs!

**T**HE fatal conception which gives birth to this slavish labour, engenders at the same time a contempt for all labour: how could it be otherwise? for this unwilling toil is a yoke of bondage. If one might shake it off, escape from it, what a dream! And, since it is undergone solely for the sake of money or place, why not arrive at these good things by other means, — speculation, for instance, gambling, or, quite simply and directly, by theft? These thoughts come of themselves, and do not want for a reception; and as in all other matters, those who entertain them judge others by themselves, so that, wherever a man bestirs himself or devotes himself to some cause, they wonder what personal incentive he has. It is the recompense of these men, who sell themselves, that they cannot be-

lieve in the disinterestedness of anybody else. And unfailingly the mercenary worker comes to envy those whom men call favourites of fortune. Have they not, without pains or exertion, by accident of birth, or by some good chance, come into possession of everything they want? It grieves me to say it, but this is the circle round which the thought of most men goes. "He is obliged to work; he has to work for his living,"—these current phrases say a great deal by inference, and by the innumerable shades of meaning with which they are spoken. People come to regard the hands and brows which show no trace of toil or fatigue as more presentable, more honourable, than the others! Unquestionably the greater part of us gain our livelihood by work, even work in the sweat of our faces; nothing is more natural, or worthier of respect. But we should do well to remember that of all things labour brings us, our bread is but the least part. The whole man lives for labour and by labour; it nourishes, strengthens, develops, purifies, and liberates his entire

being. It is just and right that every man who toils should have his bread, and *toil without bread is a social disgrace*; but work is too noble, too marvellous, too heroic, to be recompensed by a morsel of food. Rightly considered, it belongs in the list of things which have no equivalent in money. “*You are paid to do that!*” — Here is another of those charming phrases which figure among the amenities men exchange. As if that said it all! This understanding of human activity is one of our scourges, a conception which fastens itself upon humanity like a curse. But as we should not undertake our work exclusively for the sake of gain, so we should not judge the work of others from this point of view.

HAVE you ever, at evening, in the chimney corner, ruminating as you poked the coals, found your thoughts turning to the miner who went to seek them in the bowels of the earth? Don't dismiss the subject by saying that he was paid to do it. Can a man be paid for



burying himself alive, for running the risks of such a life as this, for the renunciation of the sun and the air of heaven? The thing that you put into his hand is a bagatelle in comparison to what he has put into his work.

Suppose the master who instructs your child has found his true vocation, and puts into his teaching the best of himself, his thought and his heart: is there money enough on earth to repay this? The sympathetic physician, who has made the spectacle of our misery and infirmities his daily bread, who spends himself and often exposes his health and life for the sake of strangers — do you see some way of recompensing him? And what might be the money value of a melody in which a happy soul is singing, or of a poem that is a cry of the heart? of a picture, a statue, a simple phrase, in which the very substance of things, or man's moral struggles, or some dear-bought experience or great human truth, has found expression? Or how much gold would outweigh the work of a poor seamstress, into which

she has put taste and ingenuity, grace and beauty, and in whose making she has parted with some of her health?

We are too heedless of all these things, and that is why there are so many hirelings among us and so much ingratitude. But he who is veritably a Christian remembers them, knowing that labour, like love, and truth, and liberty, and justice, cannot be bought and sold.

**I**S it not evident that labour is an indispensable source of good to man? It ought to provide bread, but he who already has bread cannot therefore dispense with labour. I am reminded here of Paul's terrible saying in his second epistle to the Thessalonians: *If any one will not work, neither let him eat.* It is the death sentence of idlers. Their place is underground, not above it. But, alas! you will say, this harsh theory leaves practically undisturbed the army of parasites and pleasure-seekers who do not work, yet who dine sumptuously every day. My reply is that

you should have better eyes and a clearer judgment; for no other word of condemnation was ever more pitilessly fulfilled. The bread of the idle is the bread of shame and misfortune, a bread not of nourishment but of corruption. Idleness, be it the rich man's or the poor man's, is decadence, is death. *There is no pity in God's world for him who does nothing*; he is dedicated to destruction by his very sloth.

Have you ever watched a bright child playing by himself? How absorbed he is, and how serious! and how he applies himself! Is it really play — this occupation upon which he has concentrated his whole being? Yes, it is play, but it is infinitely more. It is the need of action, the joy of knowing, the rapture of creating, of which you are a spectator. Work is to man what play is to the child; but, this point conceded, we must go further. To the love of work must be joined belief in it. To what height would the noblest and most disinterested labour reach, if in the eyes of the labourer it were no more than a satisfaction of

the need of action? In the pain of labour the toiler ought to feel that he is accomplishing something for the lasting good of his race. In a word, from the sight of his absorption, you ought to carry away the impression of what the poet has expressed as

*“his faith sublime  
In the busy flight of time”*

**W**E find to-day, in the case of a great number of men, particularly young men, a certain lamentable disposition of mind; they work without faith in work. Exempt from vain ambitions or base desire for gain, they yet display a feverish activity; but they have no aim. There is no sense to their life, why should there be to their work? All is vanity! These workers sometimes say, with a sorry smile, that, after all, as between the toilers and the idlers, it is difficult to say which have chosen the better part. It is not astonishing that this aimless labour becomes, in the end, wearisome to both

body and mind, and brings lowered vitality and vacillation. The will becomes powerless, without a higher conception of life, and faith in human progress. Yet this assurance, which is the spring of man's tireless energy, does not always present itself in the guise of formulated belief; often it is unconscious, appearing as a vocation as irresistible as it is impossible to explain. But under one form or another, man must have the sense of the permanent value of his work, and, to get an idea of the intensity of life which labour thus understood communicates to the labourer, nothing is so good as to stop sometimes to contemplate the lives of great workers.

**I**T is about the year 1660. In a poor room, a man is at work polishing lenses for microscopes and telescopes. He might be a common workman, from his simplicity, but wait a little. From time to time he stops to jot down in a book some thought which seems to possess him. His face, pale in spite of its youth, and strangely

grave, bears the stamp of genius. Nothing in his surroundings seems to exist for him. His attitude and his abstraction have the fixity of things immutable. Who is he? One of the best men and best thinkers of all the ages; he is Spinoza, happy man! but not happy as the world sees it; for he is poor, and very likely cold and hungry. A dreadful malady, too, is sapping his health, anathema has fallen on his head, and an early death awaits him. But when his thought takes flight among worlds, sounds the depths, scales the heights; when he launches his hardy bark on the shoreless sea whose every billow bears to him the name of God, he is so great, so rich, so penetrated with deathlessness, that all the things which men admire and covet have disappeared from his vision.

**P**ARIS, at the end of the eighteenth century. A schoolmaster, and a philosopher no less, distressed by the unhappy fate of the blind, resolves to study them, and seek for some means of teaching them and giving them

back their manhood. But his aim is hard of attainment. Besides the obstacle of the infirmity he has to deal with, he encounters that opacity of another sort called prejudice; and every day proves to him afresh that none is so blind as those that will not see. Well, so be it! that does not alter his side of the case. Valentine Haüy has a vocation. He buckles to, follows out his ideas, even pays his pupils for taking his lessons, to compensate them for the alms they lose! And patiently and wisely he develops the sense of touch, atones for lost eyes by the hand, that eye of the blind. That is, he succeeds, accomplishes his aim, and the disappointments, the ingratitude and the opposition, are forgotten. He is repaid for his struggle by the work itself, by the pleasure of doing good, and the joy of those whom he has restored to the dignity of men and the life of the soul.

EVERY Frenchman knows the story of Oberlin and Félix Neff, those two splendid workers for God, twice over the shepherds of their poor and needy flocks in the Alpine villages; men who laboured in the pulpit Sundays, and on the highways and in the fields and mountains during the week, and were never more eloquent than with pickaxe in hand. The sacred fire burned within them. Like Christ in poverty, like Paul the craftsman, they transformed the humblest labours by heartily entering into them, so that they inspire us — so powerful is example! — not only to admire them, but also to imitate them.

MY thought turns to the dogged labours of certain of the fathers of modern science, to the long and difficult research of a Claude Bernard, pursuing, in a damp and ill-lighted cellar, studies that were to honour his country and his race. What a life! how we feel, as we consider these men, that they form a



veritable priesthood! When they bend to their task, their whole being is aflame; they follow their idea as the hunter tracks the chamois; passing time, besetting cares, privations, — all these things are forgotten. Their daily bread is their work, and in their work they implicitly believe. At the bottom of every true vocation, is this certitude, conscious or unconscious, of the far-reaching significance of human labour, and the greatest workers are the men of greatest faith. Without naming the name of God, without professing the religion of Christ, he who toils for justice's sake, for humanity, for truth, is inevitably a fellow-worker with God. Of all tests of the truth, none equals that intimate communion with the realities whose secret lies in work. The sublimity and sanctity of life never really appear to us, until we have made them the sacrifice of our activities.

**W**E come now to a sort of labour in which more than in any other the need is felt for an aim, and faith in that aim,— I mean the labour that is brutalizing and debasing, the work of a beast of burden, which, nevertheless, is imposed upon an immense number of our fellows. How shall a man think when he is degraded to the service of a machine? how shall he throw his soul into labour which he can successfully accomplish only by transforming himself into an automatic tool? Can one love such drudgery as this? Work should make a man alive, but such work as this slays him! What is the Christian to think of labour under such conditions?

**H**E is to think it an evil, and an evil which should diminish, and finally disappear, through the efforts of those who consider other things as well as their own interests. Men of a positivist turn of mind are not of this opinion. They are ready to prove to us,

by figures and statistics, that such an undertaking would be no less chimerical than sentimental. But minds of this stamp have always seen the impossibility of anything new under the sun, and every good and courageous thing accomplished, even in the scientific field, which is their freehold, is accomplished in spite of them. It appears, since we have them among us, that the existence of these sages is necessary in the general scheme of things; but one could wish they might remember that among the very positive advantages which they enjoy, exceeding few have not been procured for them by those whom they call fools. In the name of what Saint Paul called the foolishness of the cross, the Christian has this principle to guide him:—When there exists anywhere a state of suffering, a wrong, a condition of affairs that men of feeling deplore and that troubles the conscience of the upright, to become resigned to it is wicked. Although the evil flaunts itself before our eyes, and no remedy is in sight, we must go seek a remedy. In the creation of the

God of Justice, evil can be but a transitory state, the result of ignorance and error. Then here is our first duty, — to use all possible means for arriving at a diminution of the sum of these inhuman labours, and the number of their victims.

Another duty faces us: Why should those bowed down under such burdens be treated with contempt? They are so treated, and it is the worst part of their martyrdom. I ask you to give them honour! You decorate the soldier scarred and maimed in battle; honour also these vanquished in the battle of life, victims of the fate of a slave. In olden times there were professions which ennobled those who followed them; make room in your hearts, make room in men's ideas, for this particular kind of nobility, not characterized by beauty of person or superiority of mind, but by the piteous stigma branded on the lowering brow and the enfeebled intellect by the crushing weight of a labour of the damned!

**S**OCIETY is a great body whose members are perforce knit together in firm union; no one of them can live for himself, but all their life is interdependent. Every useful work done in society, is done for all, and he who accomplishes it, takes, in so far, the place of the others. Let us face the conclusions of this fact. The social life in which we all share is a consumer of activities and of lives. Any good from it that comes our way may have been wrought out through tears, unspeakable sufferings, and the immolation of souls. Almost all our social advantages, if we learn their history, have in them some teaching for us, some appeal to our pity and our gratitude. Are you a Christian? ponder these truths; they are big with the future. It is by the leadings of the heart that we must search for the paths of tomorrow. Suffer with the sufferings of your brothers, learn to love them, and ways of deliverance for them will be revealed to you that the egoist could never find.

**A**NTIQUITY often shows us the cultivation of the body in happy combination with that of the mind. It is full, too, of illustrious men who joined manual training with the knowledge or administration of affairs. Such an education is not simply happy in its effects upon mental equilibrium, and that sanity of the whole man which results from a normal development of all his aptitudes; it has also its social consequences. This is a very important matter, that should be sifted to the bottom.

We have arrived at an almost infinitesimal division of labour. Our specialization is such that even in contingent spheres of labour we no longer understand one another, while in those more widely separated the trouble is of course greater still. We have become somewhat like those watchmakers who do not know what a watch is, because they have spent their lives in making special parts of the mechanism, whose place in the whole they do not even know. It is a

sad matter for those who collaborate, and much study and numerous discoveries and surprises await the intrepid explorers of fields neighbouring on their own. The most useful and fruitful experience a man of some leisure can have, is to go out of his own sphere of activity, and learn to perform and comprehend other men's labour; and he who pushes his ardour to the point of changing his social class, will as surely discover a new world as did Christopher Columbus. To leave for a time our familiar surroundings, conventions, and ties, and the influences of them all, and plunge into a life unfamiliar to us, become obscure among the obscure, share their toil and bondage, and undergo their hardships and sufferings; to see the under side of social questions, after viewing them from above; to feel their weight, after skimming along their surface, — never a diver who has gone to the bottom of the sea has brought back more astonishing information than shall the new race of explorers among these experiences. Down in this neglected world,

where men toil and die, are the weak who will never find the way to the light, unless some stronger and more clear-sighted brother goes down even where they are and lifts them up.

**I** WOULD that these truths had a place in the education of our children; it needs strengthening by a closer contact with sane and healthful toil. I would that our children were oftener told to honour all toilers, and to show most respect to the most unfortunate among them. I would they knew that to do nothing is disgraceful. We too often seek for our children a path of joyous ease and unearned happiness, but we should change all that, — we who are Christians; our Master followed other paths. Do you wish your boys to become in reality men? then let them arrive at a competence only through labour, and at honour only through obedience and discipline. Whatever spheres of activity they choose, let them begin at the bottom of the ladder, with their hands in the grime and their necks under

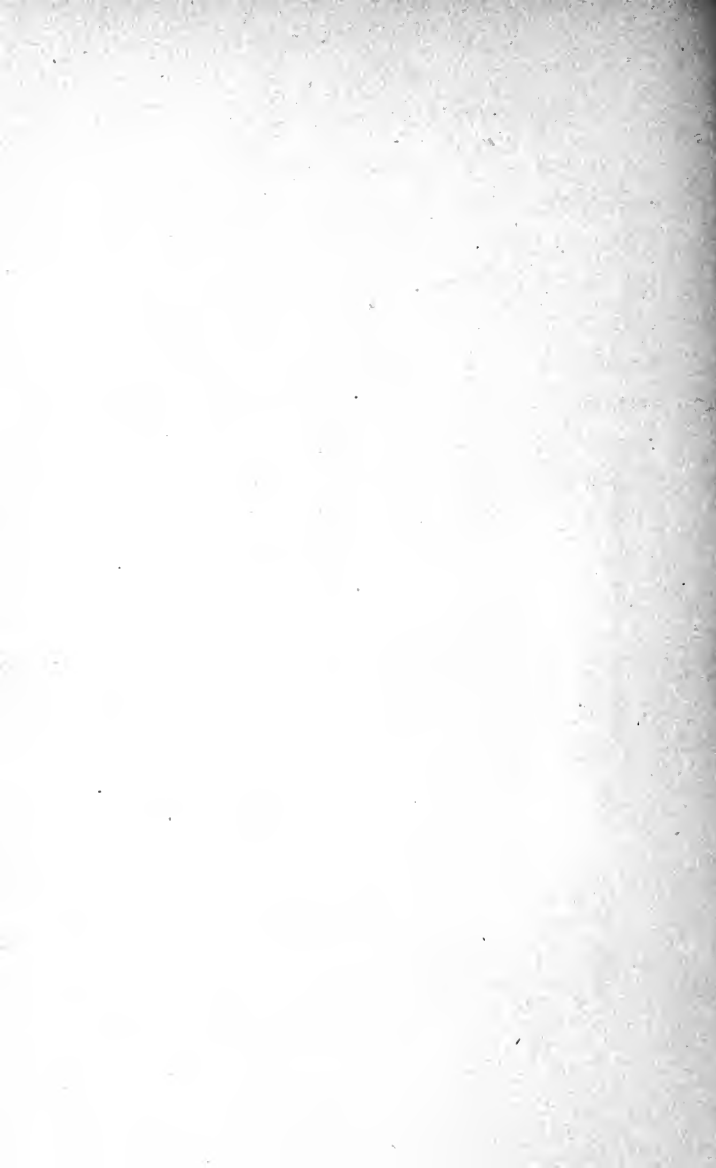


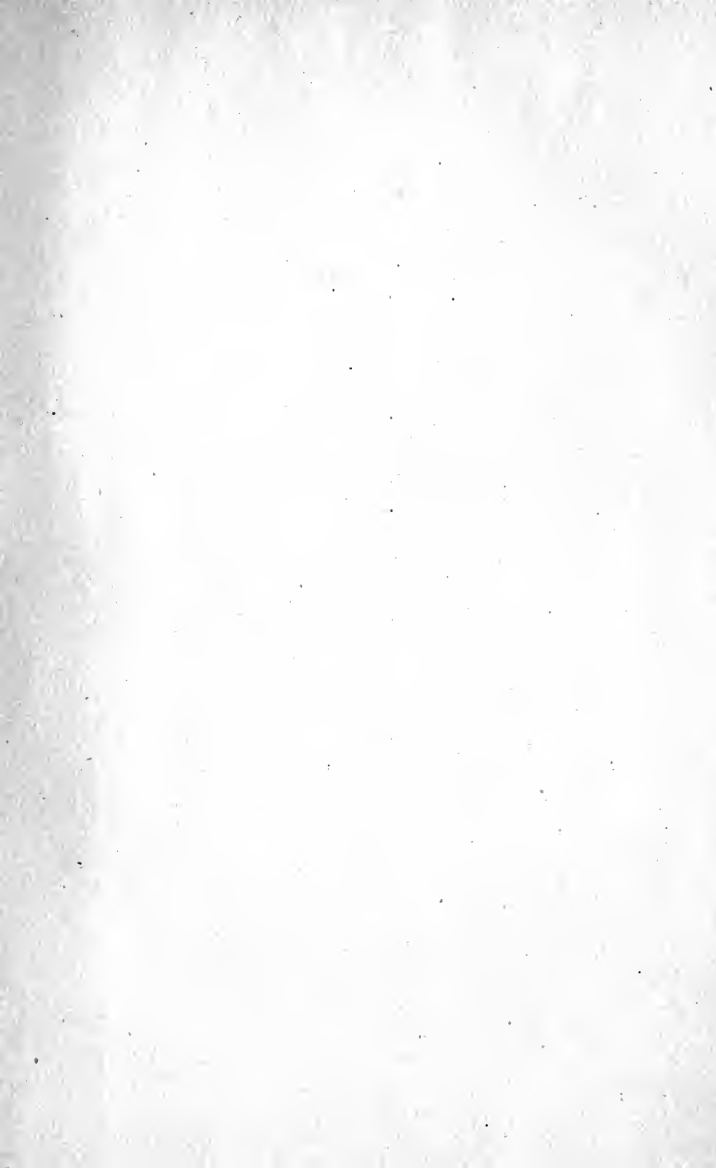
the yoke. It is well for a man to fraternize for a while with those to whom he will give orders later on. The employer should be a workman of yesterday, if he is to be mindful of the interests of the workman of to-day. The want of good understanding here, comes from our over-specialization, and also from the fact that too many of us — and those whose views are law — have created artificial distinctions between occupations more or less desirable. All useful work is equally honourable, but if any is privileged, let it be the humblest and that least recompensed in the eyes of men. We are all fellow-workers with one another, bound together by our common beginning and end; we are all fellow-workers with God; and to become penetrated with these facts is to have the religious conception of work. When this conception becomes general, the commercial valuation of work will no longer be the standard; and as the doom of inhuman and anti-social labour is lightened, the shameful trade of idler will become less and less possible.

**A** QUESTION takes possession of me as I close. What of the infirm, the wrecks of life; what of the wearied hands and the trembling knees? In this humanity where all is activity and exertion, what place is there for them? The nobler and the more sacred work appears to be, the sadder becomes their lot. To feel yourself useless, — what an affliction! But be comforted, poor outcasts from life's workshop, crushed under the burden of idle days; you, too, have a part to play; you are of the greatest help to the rest of us, for in every sphere of society it is you who most of all keep us mindful of the brotherhood of man. You suffer! let your love go out to other sufferers. If you belong to the class called fortune-favoured, plead for your brothers in misfortune. Suffering brings wondrous revelations with it; teach us what it has taught you of humanity, and you may become the beacon-lights of the race. The strong and intrepid are quickly stirred to strife and contention, and led on to injustice; the turmoil they must enter, and

the dust of combat, cloud their view. Do you, in the solitude of enlightening pain, contrive for us a refuge of peace, an oasis of justice! Lead toward the Father your brothers who are estranged from each other and refuse each other aid, and you shall become the most powerful of all workers. Your trembling hands shall remove mountains that the arms of the strong cannot lift. The strength of God shall dwell in your weakness, and in you shall this great truth be best shown forth: *Work may become, through the efforts of men, the realization of the Kingdom of God.*

THE END





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